



# **The ‘Land of Song’: Gender and Identity in Welsh Choral Music, 1872–1918**

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction for the requirements for  
the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology

by

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*in memory of my sister, Laura*

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## Notes on Welsh Pronunciation<sup>1</sup>

For readers unfamiliar with the pronunciation of Welsh, I provide here a number of rules for guidance. Generally speaking, the pronunciation of Welsh is straightforward since all letters in Welsh words are sounded (with the exception of diphthongs) and the main stress falls on the penultimate syllable. It is worth noting some distinctions about Welsh vowels and consonants:

### Vowels

Welsh vowels include *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* (as in English) but also *w* and *y*. Moreover, each vowel has a long and a short version. Where a circumflex accent is present above a vowel, it signals that a long sound is needed (such as *tŷ* meaning ‘house’). The following serves as a guide:

Vowel	Short Sound		Long Sound	
a	tan	<i>tant</i> (‘string’)	hard	<i>tad</i> (‘father’)
e	get	<i>teŷyn</i> (‘harp’)	care	<i>cerdd</i> (‘craft’)
i	miss	<i>disgybl</i> (‘apprentice’)	leave	<i>prif</i> (‘main’)
o	doss	<i>dosbarth</i> (‘class’)	door	<i>côr</i> (‘choir’)
u	tin	<i>uchelwr</i> (‘nobleman’)	been	<i>du</i> (‘black’)
w	good	<i>cupan</i> (‘cup’)	croon	<i>crwth</i>
y	gun	<i>cyŷgan</i> (‘chorus’)	further	<i>y</i> / <i>yr</i> (‘the’)
y (as final syllable)	similar to tin (as above)	<i>teŷyn</i> (‘harp’)	similar to been (as above)	<i>tŷ</i> (‘house’)

### Consonants

The consonants *b*, *d*, *l*, *m*, *n* and *t* (all of which are sounded as in English), while *s* is sounded like ‘silk’ and *r* is rolled. Moreover, the Welsh language also features a number of more distinctive consonants:

ch	Bach	<i>chwech</i> (‘six’)
dd	th, as in those	<i>cerdd</i> (‘craft’)
f	v, as in van	<i>llyfr</i> (‘book’)
ff	f, as in father	<i>fffenestr</i> (‘window’)
ng	as in singing	<i>englyn</i> (a poetic form)
ll	as l but expelling air past the tongue <sup>2</sup>	<i>llyfr</i> (‘book’)
ph	philosophy	usually occurs only after a mutation, e.g. <i>a phobl</i> (‘and people’)
rh	rolled r followed by ‘huh’	<i>rhos</i> (‘moorland’)
th	think, or bath	<i>dosbarth</i> (‘class’)

<sup>1</sup> This pronunciation guide is based upon Sally Harper (2008), pp. xviii–xix.

<sup>2</sup> Ll is also produced by placing the tongue on the back of the front teeth and blowing.

## Conventions

My representation of the Welsh language requires clarification. While some words such as ‘eisteddfod’ have become anglicised in general speech, since the word is not of English origin, it appears in italics. Moreover, I also use the Welsh plural forms such as *eisteddfodau*, rather than adding an ‘s’ which is customary in English. My translation of Welsh terms also requires some description. First, all nouns and genres will be italicised and a translation will appear in parentheses, such as (English, ‘translation’). Second, all proper nouns, names, musical groups and place names will not be italicised, although a translation will also be provided in parentheses on the first appearance of each term, such as (translation).

The representation of names is problematic. At times, the same person may have more than one name since it is customary in Wales for musicians especially to possess an additional bardic name. In these cases, the bardic name is presented in parentheses and inverted commas following the person’s birth name, such as Griffith Rhys Jones (‘Caradog’). For recurring instances, the bardic name will be used with inverted commas. For the sake of clarity, where the same first name or surname is shared by two or more people, the name is used in full or an accompanying note is given in the text to simplify the matter. While every effort has been made to provide dates for the main protagonists mentioned, where the information has not been able to be located I provide (n.d.) after the name.

In terms of referencing, I adopt here the conventions of the Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA). Following the standard precedent, additions to quotations or points of clarity are marked in square brackets [ ]. Due to the number of newspaper sources used from freely-available online digital repositories (such as Welsh Newspapers Online, 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers and The Times Digital Archive), I do not provide a URL for each citation but rather the title of the newspaper and the time of publication (including the day, month and year). For instances when more unusual newspapers are cited (usually from American



sources which are not available via the resources mentioned above), I provide the details of publication (as above) as well as a URL and the date the article was accessed. It is worth noting also that many of the URLs cited have been shortened. A full list of the newspapers cited is provided in the bibliography.

## Abstract

This thesis concerns Wales as the ‘land of song’. In particular, it looks at choral singing in Wales which has long been considered a male tradition. From definitions of Welsh musical traditions featured in encyclopaedias to the continued use of male voice choirs at cultural events (such as rugby matches), men are continually promoted as the only bearers of the Welsh choral tradition. By contrast, this thesis questions such an assertion by arguing that women were also key players in its development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this matter, I interrogate two gendered stereotypes: Wales as ‘the land of my mothers’ (with reference to the suffrage movement) and Wales as ‘the land of my fathers’ (with reference to music, sport and nationhood). Conceived as a historical ethnography, this thesis draws upon extensive primary and secondary sources to provide the first in-depth study of gender and identity in Welsh choirs.

The core of the thesis is comprised of historical narratives of four case study choirs from the period under study, namely the South Wales Choral Union (led by ‘Caradog’), the Rhondda Glee Society (led by Tom Stephens) and the two Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choirs (led by Clara Novello Davies and Hannah Hughes-Thomas respectively). In each case, I provide a discussion of the choir’s origin and the social context in which it developed, details about performance practice, membership, social class, repertoire and each choir’s relationship to notions of gender and identity in Wales. Moreover, I present a new understanding of the choirs’ conductors through biographical accounts; information regarding Clara Novello Davies and Hannah Hughes-Thomas especially has not been featured in previous scholarly studies. Informed by my perspective as a Welsh woman, I present a nuanced reading of Wales as ‘the land of song’ by considering both historical narratives and personal ethnographic experiences today. In this manner, this thesis contributes to ethnomusicological literature on gendered discourse and concepts of nationhood.

## Preface

Why have male voice choirs become renowned in Wales? Is it possible to construct a form of national belonging through vocal performance? In order to answer such questions concerning gender and identity respectively, a consideration of the role of music in Welsh culture must be made. Sources on musical performance in Wales can be traced back to the medieval period when music and poetry on a competitive basis in the context of *eisteddfodau* constituted an important activity of the bardic order.<sup>3</sup> Centuries later, in 1792, the musical heritage of Wales was controversially shaped by Edward Williams ('Iolo Morganwg', 1747–1826), a stonemason from Llancarfan, Glamorganshire (South Wales) who possessed a number of antiquarian interests despite a lack of formal education. Here, he invented a ceremony called the 'Gorsedd of the Bards' (*gorsedd* meaning 'throne') at Primrose Hill in London where he was residing at the time. With little effort required, he managed to convince his contemporaries in the London Welsh community that the ceremony had a long history among the bardic traditions of Wales and, in 1819, the ceremony was 'revived' at a provincial *eisteddfod* held in Carmarthen; the legacy of Iolo's invention has been maintained since the Gorsedd ceremony continues to form part of the annual National Eisteddfod (established in Aberdare in 1861).

But what does Iolo Morganwg have to do with male choral singing in Wales? The answer here lies in the relationship between myth and history. Described as a 'wild dreamer' and someone who was 'driven by historical myths', Iolo Morganwg was a romantic mythologist who went to drastic lengths to ensure not only the ancient cultural past of his nation (by claiming that Welsh bards had been the heirs of ancient Druids), but also of his hometown (by forging

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<sup>3</sup> An *eisteddfod* (pl. *eisteddfodau*) is a traditional festival celebrating Welsh cultural forms such as music and poetry in a competitive setting.

manuscripts and documents to promote the distinctiveness of Glamorgan).<sup>4</sup> While Iolo's fabricated ritual represents one example of how historical myth has been retained in the present, the Welsh male voice choir tradition reflects another. On the one hand, the tradition of male singing is distinct since it developed naturally in contrast to Iolo's custom. On the other, however, there is a link between the two since the commonly-held perception that only men participated in (and became renowned for) choral singing is a myth as this thesis will show.

As with most scholarly endeavours, there is a personal reason to explain why I am interested in this topic. Although I believe it unnecessary to provide copious details about my educational training and upcoming, some knowledge about my background should help the reader to understand the rationale behind my thought processes and my relation to the subject matter. I grew up (and continue to reside in) a small village situated on the outskirts of Bridgend, a town in South Wales (located approximately 20 miles West of Cardiff). Music has always been part of my upbringing here; I have fond memories of singing at Sunday school when I was very little, before learning to sing folksongs (in English and in Welsh) at primary school and participating in annual *eisteddfodau* (often held around 1 March, St David's Day) at secondary school. That being said, the equation of singing with a broader sense of national belonging was not something that occurred to me despite the fact that the people of Wales have been historically associated with choral practice.

My ideas about this relationship began to change while I was studying for an undergraduate degree in Music at Cardiff University. Here, as part of a final-year project in Ethnomusicology, I interrogated the issues of gender and identity as they related to Bulgarian, rather than Welsh, polyphony. Attracted initially by the sound of the rich vocal harmonies, I

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<sup>4</sup> Prys Morgan, 'From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp.61–62. Wales was not the only Celtic country subject to invented traditions. In the same book, it is argued by Hugh Trevor Roper that the notion of a distinct Highland tradition in Scotland was specifically constructed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In particular, he charts the involvement of two unrelated men – James Macpherson and Rev. John Macpherson – who worked together to forge history through literature (much in the same way as Iolo Morganwg in Wales) in order to assert the existence of a distinct Celtic culture in Scotland. For more information, see Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', in Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds), pp.15–41.

conducted fieldwork at concerts and workshops held by the London Bulgarian Choir with a desire to find out how this mixed choir negotiated the inclusion of men; in contrast to vocal practices in Wales, singing in Bulgaria is traditionally performed by women (with men leading in the instrumental domain). Moreover, it was through interviewing the choir's conductor, Dessislava Stefanova that I began to question my own musical heritage. I realised that if someone were to ask me the same questions on music and identity with relation to choral practice, I would struggle to answer in relation to Wales. But in a nation that possesses a strong reputation for singing, together with the fact that I was (by then) a trained singer, why did I feel so detached from the tradition? Here, despite representing a cultural insider in terms of national identification, I (like other Welsh women) believe that I have been historically excluded from participating in the tradition, precisely because I am female.

Negotiating a position between insider and outsider (known frequently as the emic/etic dichotomy) has proved to be a complex task for a number of ethnomusicologists. For example, in his study of Bulgarian music (specifically his acquisition of skills relating to the Bulgarian bagpipes, the *gaida*), Timothy Rice noted that the dichotomy is rooted upon an understanding that both an 'insider set of meanings' and an 'objective, outsider position' exist. In reality, however, Rice argues that even when a cultural insider verifies the musical, verbal or physical actions of a researcher as 'true', such actions are the product of understanding as self-understanding (invoking Ricoeur).<sup>5</sup> Here, the researcher is neither 'emic nor etic, insider nor outsider'.<sup>6</sup> It could be argued, however, that Rice represents an 'outsider' since he is not Bulgarian. In this matter, Bruno Nettl has detailed an alternative approach to ethnomusicology

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, trans. and ed. by John B. Thompson (Cambridge: CUP, 1981).

<sup>6</sup> Timothy Rice, *May It Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p.88.

that emerged during the 1980s in which some ethnomusicologists have turned towards researching their own cultures, a trend that he refers to as ‘backyard ethnomusicology’.<sup>7</sup>

Following the methodological precedent suggested by Nettl and a desire to investigate the role of gender in Welsh singing, I completed a Master’s dissertation on contemporary choral performance in Wales (2009–2010). Conducting fieldwork on three choirs – a traditional male choir, an alternative male choir (a gay men’s chorus) and a Cardiff-based female choir – I sought to understand how an established image of ‘the Welsh male voice choir’, a singular image linking national identity, singing and masculinity, was confirmed or contested by these distinct groups. Pursuing a focus on the performance of identities (as suggested by its title “‘Land of my Fathers’: Performing Masculinities in Welsh Choral Music”), my research concluded that the hegemonic form of choral singing in Wales is defined not only in terms of gender but also in terms of sexuality. Although the male choral tradition is not overtly framed in terms of heterosexuality, a comparison with how a gay male choir negotiates sexuality in its musical performances showed that the relationship is largely assumed.

While my Master’s dissertation addressed important and innovative questions about gender, sexuality and identity in present-day choirs in Wales, I remained preoccupied with the issue of a female lineage (or lack of) in the development of the tradition. In this matter, scholarly publications concerning singing in Wales tended to focus upon individual male composers or conductors, and often traced the development of male and mixed choirs without considering the historical significance of female choirs. By contrast, this thesis on choral singing in Wales presents an examination of both male and female vocal practices to realise an alternative interpretation of the past. Although focussed predominantly on musical activity occurring between 1872 (the year in which a 500-strong mixed choir won the first prize at a national event held in London’s Crystal Palace) and the end of the First World War in 1918, the narrative

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<sup>7</sup> See Bruno Nettl, ‘You Call that Fieldwork? Redefining the “Field”’, in *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), pp.184–96.

features a contemporary register since it considers also how concepts of history are constructed in the present.

Informed by theoretical approaches to historical ethnomusicology, I aim to show how the choral tradition in Wales developed along gendered lines. Although I am primarily interested in how women have participated in the tradition (and similarly how the performances of women have been represented), I provide also an investigation into male choirs. Linked to related studies on historical ethnography (see O'Connell 2013), the thesis draws upon archival sources (both musical and non-musical) and ethnographic accounts (including published autobiographies and unpublished diaries) in order to interrogate the issues of gender and identity as they relate to Welsh choral music. It examines also musical collections from sacred and secular sources, as well as visual materials relating to musical practices. Utilising the recent digitisation of Welsh newspapers (funded by the Welsh Government) dating from 1804 to 1919, I have been able to reference an extensive range of press reports in English and in Welsh.<sup>8</sup> Since I am not a native Welsh speaker, I have undertaken a number of intensive language courses at the Welsh for Adults centre in Cardiff University.

The thesis is structured in the following manner. In the opening chapters, I provide a musical overview and cultural context by showing how men, in particular, have been represented in choral music (Chapter 1) and by tracing religious developments that fostered the growth of congregational singing (Chapter 2). I then go on to assess music making in secular contexts by looking at the formation of a large mixed choir (Côr Mawr) that achieved national success (under the direction of Griffith Rhys Jones (or 'Caradog')) in 1872 and 1873 (Chapter 3) and by tracing the development of one successful male choir, the Rhondda Glee Society (Chapter 4). I then explore two female choirs (both called the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir) that were directed by Clara Novello Davies (Chapter 5) and Hannah Hughes-Thomas (Chapter 6). Here, the social aspirations and the economic strategies of each artist is uncovered in Chapter 7, and in Chapter

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<sup>8</sup> For Welsh Newspapers Online, see <<http://welshnewspapers.llgc.org.uk>>.

8, I examine further the role of women in society; first in terms of the public domain and second in relation to the national sphere, where contemporary notions of domesticity and femininity respectively are confirmed or challenged. In this matter, I interrogate two gendered stereotypes: Wales as ‘the land of my mothers’ (with reference to the suffrage movement) and Wales as ‘the land of my fathers’ (with reference to music, sport and nationhood). Accordingly, I present a nuanced reading of Wales as ‘the land of song’.

My research would not have been possible without the support of a number of institutions and individuals. To begin with, I want to thank the librarians and archivists who facilitated my research. I am grateful to the staff of the following libraries: the National Library of Wales, the British Library, Cardiff Central Library and the libraries of Cardiff University. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to the staff at the university’s Music Library. In terms of archives, I am indebted to the staff of the Glamorgan Archives (in Cardiff), the West Glamorgan Archives (in Swansea) and the Special Collections and Archives (SCOLAR) at Cardiff University. I would especially like to thank Alison Harvey from SCOLAR for her help in providing musical recordings and answering related questions when needed. At a local level, I am beholden to the expertise of John Dunkley-Williams at the Local and Family History Centre in Bridgend.

My principal debt, however, is to area specialists and music scholars. In particular, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr John Morgan O’Connell who provided my first introduction to Ethnomusicology at an undergraduate level, and has nurtured my love of the subject in subsequent years. Without his boundless enthusiasm and unfaltering encouragement, this thesis would not have been possible. For that, I will be eternally grateful. I would also like to acknowledge the support of Dr O’Connell in helping me to secure two financial awards to fund this doctoral research: a School of Music studentship and a ‘125 for 125’ Scholarship (both at Cardiff University). I would also like to thank the staff at St Fagans National History Museum. In particular, I would like to thank Elen Phillips (Curator of Contemporary



and Community History) for showing me the relevant textile and clothing collections and answering my numerous questions. Moreover, I am indebted to the expert knowledge of Dr Emma Lile (now former Curator of Music, Sport and Customs) who contributed to my doctoral research by sharing and discussing the museum's collections. Unbeknown to Emma, she has also been a source of inspiration since I heard her speaking at an event held at the museum a number of years ago.

Presenting at national and international conferences has played an important role in shaping the ideas for this thesis. In this matter, I would like to acknowledge the scholars who have provided insightful feedback and asked challenging yet necessary questions. Notably I would like to recognise Professor Trevor Herbert, Professor Rachel Cowgill and the specialist knowledge of my former singing teacher, John Hugh Thomas. I am grateful also to my work colleagues at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD) library for providing necessary cover allowing me to attend such conferences, with thanks especially to my former manager Judith Agus and my current employer Megan Wiley. My gratitude also extends to my colleagues at the RWCMD (both past and present) who have shown an interest in, and provided encouragement for my academic endeavours.

Although doctoral research is largely the product of personal ambition, there are a number of people without whom I could not have completed this study. For nurturing my love of singing, a special mention must be given to my godmother, Anne Lalić who paid for my very first singing lesson when I was in my early teens. Thanks also to her sister, Maria, a textile artist by trade who has not only engaged in discussions about my research, but insisted on holding such discussions in Welsh to strengthen my fluency in the language. My experience as a research student has been enriched by my encounter with a number of postgraduate students. In particular, I would like to thank my friends Alicia Stark and Emily Garside for the numerous cups of coffee and countless sympathetic conversations. Last, but certainly by no means least, I would like to express my utmost appreciation for my parents, Nicholas and Ruth. I could not

have done this without their continued love and support, which is why this thesis is dedicated *o’r*  
*galon* (from the heart) to them.

## Chapter One

### Men of Harlech

The wind held up above his head the sound of the choir from the Chapel for me to hear, and gave it back, but in those few notes I heard the rich, male voice of the men of the Valley, golden, brave, and clean, with heart, and with loftiness of spirit, and I knew that their voice was my voice, for I was part of them as they were of me, and the Valley was part of us and we were part of the Valley, not one more than the other, never one without the other. Of me was the Valley and the Valley was of me, and every blade of grass, and every stone, and every leaf of every tree, and every knob of coal or drop of water, or stick or branch or flower or grain of pollen, or living creature, or dust in ground, all were of me as my blood, my bones, or the notions from my mind.<sup>1</sup>

The above words are reproduced from a novel by Richard Llewellyn (1906–1983) entitled *How Green Was My Valley*, a narrative that depicts the life of a family – called ‘the Morgans’ – living in a coalmining community in a Welsh valley. Although written in 1939, the story is presented as a nostalgic reflection upon an earlier period in South Wales when the narrator, Huw Morgan, was a young boy. Recalling the struggles placed on family life, Huw traces the transformation from the utopian vision of a pastoral green valley, to one that is blackened by the reality of an expanding coalmining industry. Although music is not the main focus of the narrative, Llewellyn shows how the struggle of industrial life is punctuated with moments of music making that promote communal accord and a unified identity. In particular, it is choral singing that is noted especially as a focus not only for social recreation but also, as the above excerpt indicates, as a marker of national identification.

What is particularly interesting in this novel, however, is the ambiguity surrounding location as it relates to music and society in South Wales. That is, Llewellyn fails to name his valley, showing how a familiar place serves to represent a cultural identity that is homogenous and typical of any Welsh valley during the late Victorian era. The immediate popularity of the publication within Wales indicated that this identity was familiar and it was therefore accepted as a true reflection of life in the South Wales valleys. In 1941, this notion of a Welsh valleys identity

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Llewellyn, *How Green Was My Valley*, [1939], Penguin Classics (2001).

was promoted to a much wider international audience when John Ford, an established American film director, adapted the novel for the screen for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. Featuring a star cast that included Maureen O'Hara, Walter Pidgeon and Roddy McDowall, the success of the film can be indicated by the number of awards it achieved; it won five Oscars (including one for 'Outstanding Motion Picture') at the 14<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards held in the Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles, in 1942.

However, it is the way that the film negotiated the themes of community, industry and identity in relation to musical practices that is particularly interesting. From the outset, a connection is established between music and life in the valleys since the opening credits are accompanied by a rendition of 'Rhyfelgyrch Gwŷr Harlech' ('March of the Men of Harlech'), and less than five minutes into the two-hour-long film the viewer is introduced to the musical element of Welsh industrial life; coal-blackened miners stand in line to collect their wages before walking humbly from the site of the mines to rows of their houses, where the woman of the household (the *mam*) is waiting to amass the family budget before helping her husband and sons to wash away the residue of a hard day's toil. Importantly, the representation of this sequence in the film is accompanied by music. Moreover, such music is not ancillary to the narrative. Instead, the music is created by (and for) the men themselves; from the moment they leave the mines to the moment they cross the threshold, they sing together in harmony.

Although this opening narrative sequence features a different song ('Cwm Rhondda' sung in Welsh) than the musical accompaniment used in the credits ('Men of Harlech' also sung in Welsh), it is the latter that will become the focus for this discussion since it has a longer-standing history in the development of Welsh music and, by extension, Welsh culture. During the fifteenth-century Wars of the Roses, a series of battles between the Lancastrians and the Yorkists for the reign of the throne, Harlech Castle came under threat (for the location of Harlech see Plate 1.1). At this time the castle, which was built on the coast of Merionethshire in North Wales in 1283, was the site of refuge and plotting for Lancastrian supporters. In 1468,

King Edward IV (1442–1483), a Yorkist, sent an army of men under the directorship of William Herbert, the earl of Pembroke, to reclaim the Welsh stronghold from the hands of the Lancastrians. Herbert’s mission was successfully rendered in a battle that lasted approximately one month (despite the castle being under siege for seven years prior to that point). However, it was the strength and determination showed by the garrison that is said to have provided the inspiration for the event’s memorialisation in song.



**Plate 1.1:** Map of Wales<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Map available online < <http://www.itraveluk.co.uk/images/maps/wales-map.gif> > [accessed 23 May 2015].

## Music in Wales

The transition from historical event to musical repertory, however, was not hasty. Instead, a period of over 300 years took place before ‘Rhyfelgyrch Gwŷr Harlech’ (or ‘Gorhoffedd Gwŷr Harlech’ as it was sometimes known) appeared in print for the first time as part of a collection that was edited and published by the Welsh harpist, Edward Jones (1752–1824).<sup>3</sup> Edward Jones was born to ‘a cultured well-to-do family’ in a village named Llandderfel in Merionethshire, where his musical education was nurtured with an abundance of traditional musicians, especially harpists who practiced the art of *penillion* singing.<sup>4</sup> In his early 20s, however, Edward Jones moved to London to pursue a professional musical career aided by financial sponsorship procured from members of the Welsh gentry. Edward Jones, who was literate in both English and Welsh, not only moved in fashionable circles while living in London but also possessed an awareness of musical trends.

In this matter, music that was considered to be characteristically Celtic or at least deriving from the Celtic areas of the British Isles became increasingly interesting for metropolitan musicians and audiences during the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> However, knowledge of Welsh music remained scant in comparison with the musics of Scotland and, to a lesser extent, Ireland. In this respect, the publications of John Parry (c.1710–1782) helped to address the significant issue. In 1742, John Parry, a blind Welsh harper who had established a professional career in London prior to Edward Jones, published 24 unnamed airs in a collection entitled *Antient British Music*. This was the first to claim that each of its tunes was of Welsh origin and had not been published previously. Based upon the reception of this collection, it could be said that Welsh music was not only welcomed but supported in London; there were 201 names on the subscription list for Parry’s collection which cost four shillings, including affluent members of the London-Welsh

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Gorhoffedd’ is a compound of the noun ‘hoffedd’ (which has various meanings including boast, delight, vain-glory or vaunting) and the prefix ‘gor-’ meaning over, super or exceedingly; there is no direct English translation of the word ‘gorhoffedd’.

<sup>4</sup> *Penillion* is a traditional form of singing in which poetry is sung in counterpoint to a melody played on the harp. Phyllis Kinney, *Welsh Traditional Music* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p.57.

<sup>5</sup> Joan Rimmer, ‘Edward Jones’ Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards, 1784: A Re-Assessment’, *The Galpin Society Journal*, 39 (1986), p.77.

community, as well as figures such as the Earl of Halifax, the Duke of Devonshire, the Duchess of Newcastle, and musicians who were members of the bourgeoisie.<sup>6</sup>



**Plate 1.2:** Frontispiece to Edward Jones' *Relicks* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 1794)<sup>7</sup>

It was into this environment that the collections of Edward Jones were launched at a time when he was engaged as harpist to the Prince of Wales, a position that he retained when the Prince became King. Appearing in 1784 was the first edition of his book on Welsh tunes entitled *Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards*, a publication that instantly surpassed the scope of John Parry's previous collections. Drawing upon his antiquarian interests, *Relicks* provided an opportunity for

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<sup>6</sup> Kinney, p.49.

<sup>7</sup> Cardiff University SCOLAR: Folio WG30. 'The Bard' by Philipps J. de Louthembourg.

Edward Jones not only to preserve ‘tradition and authentic manuscripts from remote antiquity’ but also to provide a lengthy history of the Welsh bards (see Plate 1.2), native instruments and *penillion* singing in a collection that also contributed to widening knowledge on Welsh tunes; it contained 59 airs (some printed with words) and had 283 subscribers.<sup>8</sup> A decade after the first publication, however, a second expanded edition was published in 1794 containing almost double the amount of airs (102). In order to be described as ‘never before published’, a phrase undoubtedly used to prompt commercial success, the airs of the earlier edition were modified in small ways that included changing the title of a Welsh tune (for another Welsh title) or adding an English translation to the original title.

‘Gorhoffedd Gwŷr Harlech’ appeared for the first time in print in this second edition. Although some of Edward Jones’ airs were printed with words, here the tune is presented only with its English and Welsh title and an antiquarian footnote (in English) providing background information about Harlech Castle; the War of the Roses does not form part of the narrative (see Plate 1.3). It was not until 1860 that the tune was published as a song in an edited collection called *Gems of Welsh Melody* by John Owen (‘Owain Alaw’, 1821–1883), an anthology that also introduced the song (originally titled ‘Glan Rhondda’) that would later become the Welsh national anthem to a wider audience. The success of *Gems of Welsh Melody*, which was originally published in serial form between the years of 1860 and 1864, was evident when the collection was transformed into one book in 1873. In the same year, Henry Brinley Richards (1817–1885), another London-based musician, published *The Songs of Wales* which contained another version of ‘Men of Harlech’ (here, the Welsh title was subsidiary). Unlike Owen who was both a collector and an editor, the success of Brinley Richards lay in his ability to arrange songs and airs that had already been collected or those that had already become familiar to the public; this was a sign that ‘Men of Harlech’ had secured its place in an emerging canon of Welsh traditional tunes and songs.

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<sup>8</sup> Rimmer, p.80.



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*Gorhoffedd Gwŷr Harlech.\* – The March of the Men of Harlech.*

Majestic

\* Harlech Castle, in Merionethshire, was formerly a celebrated Fortrefs, and is said to have been built by that warlike Prince Maelgwn Gwynedd, about A.D. 530. In the beginning of the sixth Century it was called Tŵr Bronwen, y Brenhinogedd; from Bronwen, the Daughter of Prince Llŷr, of Harlech; who probably lived in the Castle; and the highest Turret of it, to this day, goes by the name of Bronwen's Tower. This Castle was rebuilt, or repaired, about the Year 577, by Collwyn ab Tangno, one of the fifteen Tribes of North Wales, and Lord of Erienydd, Ardudwy, and part of Llŷn; and from him it was called Cŵr-Collwyn, or Collwyn's Castle. This venerable Castle is perhaps the most ancient remains of all the British Forts; and it is a most stately structure of exceeding strength both by Art and Nature; being situated on a lofty Rock, which commands a fine bay of the Sea, and the Passage of entrance upon that Coast. Nennius's Brit: Hist: and from an old MS.

Plate 1.3: First print appearance of 'Gorhoffedd Gwŷr Harlech' (1794)<sup>9</sup>

But why does this matter? And how does it relate to John Ford's adaption of Llewellyn's novel? The answers to these questions lie in the connection of 'Men of Harlech' with a broader sense of Welsh national identity. The inclusion of the song first in Edward Jones' seminal publication and subsequently in two important nineteenth-century musical collections (by John Owen and Brinley Richards) indicates that the piece was regarded as a part of Welsh history and culture. Here, it is interesting to consider the song text used in the film's credits, which reproduces two of the three verses from the fourth edition (1879) of Brinley Richards' *The Songs of Wales*. Although the text does not reference the battle at Harlech Castle in particular, the militaristic connection is made through the tune's use of dotted rhythms, while the association with Wales is marked both in terms of the Welsh language and also specific mentions of 'Cymru'

<sup>9</sup> Available online at IMSLP:

<[http://imslp.org/wiki/Musical\\_and\\_Poetical\\_Relicks\\_of\\_the\\_Welsh\\_Bards\\_\(Jones,\\_Edward\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Musical_and_Poetical_Relicks_of_the_Welsh_Bards_(Jones,_Edward))> (accessed 10 April 2015).

(meaning Wales) in the text. Joan Rimmer, an organologist who was interested also in historical sources, argued that Edward Jones' *Relicks* 'reveal[ed] a complex musical inheritance, [which was] not on the whole very ancient and not all Welsh in origin, but very Welsh in manner'.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, John Ford's choice to include the sound of male voices singing 'Men of Harlech' at the opening is significant for a number of reasons: first, it calls upon a sense of native identity that was created in an earlier period of Welsh history. Here, the connection to historical narrative is crucial; although the song represents the tale of a fifteenth-century battle, its adoption throughout the nineteenth century as an anthem not only for the proclamation of a national identity but also for communal singing serves to highlight how the song was adapted to suit the changing demographics of industrial Wales. That is, it serves as what Philip Bohlman would call an 'unofficial national anthem'.<sup>11</sup> The second reason that 'Men of Harlech' is noteworthy in terms of Ford's vision (and Llewellyn's narrative) is linked to gender. By utilising male-only versions of songs, the film projected a singular vision of music and masculinity to both national and international audiences and simultaneously cemented the image of Wales as a 'land of (men's) song'. It is worth noting that the book (without the aid of audio-visual technologies) also associated men with choral singing.

It may be questioned how relevant a 1939 book and a 1941 film is to the concept of national identity in contemporary Wales. In September 2014, the NATO (or North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) summit, an important political event attended by leaders and senior ministers from approximately 60 countries around the world, was held at the Celtic Manor in Newport, South Wales (with informal evening events taking place in Cardiff). The event was the first summit to be held in the United Kingdom since 1990 when Margaret Thatcher, who served as Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990, welcomed delegates to London at a time when the Cold War was nearing an end. Although important in terms of British politics and history in general,

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<sup>10</sup> Rimmer, p.82.

<sup>11</sup> According to Bohlman, 'unofficial national anthems serve all the functions of a national anthem, but they do not have the top-down sanction to represent the nation beyond its borders'. Philip V. Bohlman, *Focus: Music, Nationalism, and the Making of the New Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (New York; London: Routledge, 2011), p.111.

the 2014 summit offered Wales a chance to showcase itself as a distinct nation; David Cameron, current Prime Minister of Great Britain, stated that it was ‘a great moment for Wales to advertise its modern and economically brilliant face to the world’.<sup>12</sup> In this respect, it is the use of music that is interesting here.



**Plate 1.4:** A military band at the 2015 NATO Summit, Newport<sup>13</sup>

On 4 September, at the ceremonial opening to the summit which was attended by Barack Obama (President of the United States), David Cameron and Carwyn Jones (First Minister of Wales) amongst others, an unnamed Welsh regimental band was called upon to welcome officially the delegates to Wales. Uniform-clad members of the military band marched into the leaders’ meeting carrying the flags of the nations represented and playing an instrumental version (featuring brass and percussion) of ‘Men of Harlech’, an aural gesture to represent symbolically the nation of Wales (see Plate 1.4). Once again, however, both the relationship between music

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<sup>12</sup> NATO Summit Wales 2014, Government website <[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)> [accessed 4 May 2015].

<sup>13</sup> Still photograph taken from BBC news video. See ‘NATO summit: Men of Harlech opens leaders’ meeting’, BBC news website, 4 September 2014 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-29065160>> [accessed 15 April 2015].

and national identity in Wales, and the representation of Welsh musical culture to international audiences, is linked to a masculine ideal. While the rendition here does not feature the male voice, the militaristic nature of the musical item together with the fact that this particular piece is often viewed to be within the 'standard' repertoire for traditional Welsh male voice choirs ensures the connection. If such is true, it must be wondered what happened to the Women of Harlech? This thesis aims to explore such a question.

### **Women of Harlech: The Suffrage Movement in Wales**

In order to contextualise the role of women in Welsh society during the relevant period of this thesis, I will consider here the role of the suffrage movement in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Although the development of the women's suffrage movement has attracted significant scholarly attention in general, the emergence of the movement in Wales has commanded less interest from social historians until recent decades. The relationship between women, music and suffrage, however, has received less consideration still; in this respect, Elizabeth Wood's study on the sonography of women's suffrage is noteworthy for highlighting the compositional output of Dame Ethel Smyth (1858–1944), an English composer using music as a vehicle to express her support of the women's suffrage movement.<sup>14</sup> However, a similar study for Wales does not exist. While the framework of the present thesis does not allow for a comprehensive study of the relationship between music and suffrage in Wales, a discussion of the movement is crucial for the purpose of understanding the developing roles of women in the relevant period, particularly in the decade following the death of Queen Victoria in 1901.

The struggles associated with the women's suffrage movement began to be noticed fully in Wales from around 1907. The first decade of the twentieth century was a decade in which women of the new Edwardian era began to question some of the domestic ideals and expected

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<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Wood, 'Performing Rights: A Sonography of Women's Suffrage', *The Musical Quarterly*, 79/4 (1995), pp.606–643.

codes of social behaviour placed upon them in the late Victorian era (as discussed in the previous chapter). Moreover, the role of women (or lack thereof) in political activism was highlighted by the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884: the Second Reform Act (1867) granted votes to men who were householders or those who paid £10 or more per year to rent, as well as granting votes to agricultural landowners; the Representation of the People Act (also known as the Third Reform Act) (1884), on the other hand, equalised the voter rights of those dwelling in the countryside and those who resided in urban areas, and the redistribution of parliamentary seats the following year contributed to a government that was more representative. However, equal suffrage (whereby all members of society were granted the right to vote despite economic or gendered sanctions) was not achieved with these Acts since a proportion of men and all women were still without the right to vote. In fact, those who opposed the women's suffrage movement justified their position by arguing that it would be unfair to allow all women to vote when some men were also without voting rights.

The campaign for equal suffrage was lengthy; it was not until 1918 that the right to vote was extended with the introduction of the Representation of the People Act. This was a law that gave women over the age of 30 the right to vote but only if they were married to men or were engaged as local government electors. While the introduction of this legislation enfranchised approximately six million women throughout Britain, five million of them received the right to vote only because they were married; a fact that did not go unnoticed by suffrage campaigners. In this respect, older, married women were deemed to be 'responsible' enough whereas younger, unmarried women were more likely to be 'susceptible to radical and feminist causes'.<sup>15</sup> The 1918 Act also affected voting rights for men since it enfranchised men at the age of 21 (or 19 if they had served in the armed forces). Ryland Wallace, a Lecturer in History, importantly highlights that women who had contributed to the war effort (and were applauded by the government for

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<sup>15</sup> Ryland Wallace, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Wales, 1866–1928* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.250.

doing so) were ironically not allowed to vote if they were aged between 21 and 30.<sup>16</sup> A decade later, however, equal franchise was granted to all as women were afforded the right to vote when the Representation of the People (or Equal Franchise) Bill was passed in the House of Commons in March 1928.

While the suffrage campaign demonstrated one way in which women could operate in the public domain, there were other ways. As a means of breaking out of the strict ideals of Victorian domesticity, women, particularly those belonging to an elevated social class, embraced charitable work. Charity allowed such women not only to enter the public sphere (from which they were usually prohibited) but also to work towards emancipation. While working for charities enabled women to work in the public domain, it did not suspend the long-held patriarchal belief that women were subordinate to men. For example, Cardiff (Royal) Infirmary (established in 1883) appointed a Women's Visiting Committee to oversee the running of the wards and to ensure appropriate forms of discipline were maintained.<sup>17</sup> Crucial in the organisation of the committee was Mrs Cory, wife of John Cory (1828–1910) who was also involved in the work of the hospital.

On several occasions, the Corys provided financial support for the development of the Infirmary. The remark, however, that 'Mrs Cory visited the wards while her husband made the decisions and wrote the cheques', is not wholly true.<sup>18</sup> In a letter regarding the upkeep of beds for a new ward built in 1902, John Cory stated: 'I will consent to contribute 50 guineas for three beds (say 150 guineas) and Mrs Cory will contribute 50 guineas for the other bed – [financial sponsorship had already been secured for six of the ten beds] – on condition the ladies' committee [...] will undertake to give or collect the sum required to complete the furnishing of

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Kay Cook and Neil Evans, "'The Petty Antics of the Bell-Ringing Boisterous Band'?: The Women's Suffrage Movement in Wales, 1890–1918', in Angela V. John (ed.), *Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830–1939* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), pp.160–162.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.162.

the ward'.<sup>19</sup> Here, at least in the public view, Mrs Cory contributed to the project both in terms of finance and time. Charitable work carried out by women was not always welcomed or appreciated though. According to Kay Cook and Neil Evans, the authors of an early study on the suffrage movement in Wales, 'women who ran soup kitchens were running the gauntlet of being insulted by male working-class recipients'.<sup>20</sup> In this respect, the hierarchy of the sexes superseded that of social class.

In addition to fundraising for charitable causes (and thus challenging the Victorian-held notion that women should be confined to the domestic sphere), the crux of the women's suffrage movement was gaining the right to vote for women. Changes in the laws in 1894 and 1907 meant that female ratepayers were allowed to stand for (and vote in) parish council elections and stand for county council elections respectively.<sup>21</sup> However, it was the parliamentary vote that was sought after the most. In particular, the hopes of Welsh women were largely pinned upon the Liberal Party which had historically involved women in its form of political activism. Shadowing earlier developments in England, a number of Women's Liberal Associations (hereafter called WLAs) began to emerge in Wales in the late nineteenth century. Although established at first in the north of Wales (in Denbigh and Bala, in 1883 and 1887 respectively), WLAs soon appeared in the South too. By 1895, there were 47 WLAs in operation throughout Wales with almost 9,000 members, each of which was co-ordinated under a newly-established organisation, the Welsh Union of Women's Liberal Associations (formed in 1892; hereafter called WUWLA).<sup>22</sup>

Under the directorship of Nora Phillips, the president of the WUWLA and Eva McLaren, national organiser of the Women's Liberal Federation, the WUWLA ensured that

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<sup>19</sup> *Weekly Mail*, 25 October 1902.

<sup>20</sup> Cook and Evans, p.162.

<sup>21</sup> Deirdre Beddoe, 'Women and Politics in Twentieth Century Wales', paper presented for the Welsh Political Archive Annual Lecture (2004). Transcript accessed via the NLW website <<http://www.llgc.org.uk>> [accessed 29 March 2015].

<sup>22</sup> Wallace, pp.32–33.

suffrage remained a principal issue despite the organisation being affiliated to the Liberal Party which was concerned also with education, home rule and temperance amongst other issues. Despite the support from backers of the Liberal Party prior to the turn-of-the-century, however, the encroachment of a Liberal Government from 1906 did not present a favourable result for suffragists.<sup>23</sup> In particular, Lloyd George, a Liberal politician who was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1908 and 1915, became the subject of a barrage of abuse from militant suffragettes when he failed to deliver women's voting rights despite being in favour of enfranchisement and being employed in a policy-making position. For example, the daughter of a Glamorgan miner, Catherine Griffiths, was working as a nurse in London when she was enlisted to place tin tacks on Lloyd George's seat in the House of Commons. However, it was during his public addresses in Wales that the most violent scenes unfolded. At a disestablishment rally<sup>24</sup> held in Caernarvon Pavilion in May 1912, Lloyd George's speech was disrupted by a number of hecklers, who were in turn subjected to 'severe handling'. The women's hair was dishevelled, and in some cases their dresses were badly torn'; even the *North Wales Chronicle* admitted that 'the women were subjected to a measure of brutality which was out of all proportion to any provocation they might have offered'.<sup>25</sup>

Such campaigners (known as suffragettes) belonged to the militant strand of the suffrage mission and were aligned with the Women's Social and Political Union (hereafter called the WSPU), an organisation that was founded in Manchester in October 1903. The members of the WSPU, which was led by Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928), were known for notorious acts that

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<sup>23</sup> For clarity in the following discussion: 'suffrage' refers to the right to vote; a 'suffragist' is an advocate or a campaigner for the right to vote (this term is used particularly for those who do not use militant strategies); and, 'suffragette' is used to describe those who do use militancy in their campaign.

<sup>24</sup> The issue of disestablishing the Church of England in Wales was a controversial topic in the early twentieth century. Despite the rapid increase in the number of nonconformist worshippers who campaigned for the disestablishment of the Church since the 1860s, it was not until 1894 that a disestablishment measure was introduced. With the fall of the Liberal government, however, disestablishment was held back until the Welsh Church Act was passed in 1914 and came into effect in 1920. Although clearly a religious plight, the disestablishment campaign was also fought in the political arena; Lloyd George was an advocate for disestablishment.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Wallace, p.96; *North Wales Chronicle*, 24 May 1912.



included blowing up pillar boxes, cutting telegraph wires and smashing windows, as well as attacking 'places of male recreation such as cricket pavilions, golf courses and boat-houses'.<sup>26</sup> It may be surprising to note that 'women's suffrage was predominantly a movement of middle-class women'.<sup>27</sup> This was not to say that working-class women were not interested in such a pursuit, however the limited employment opportunities available for working-class women meant that such women lacked the organisational support of trade unions to back their involvement in political endeavours. Moreover, the domestic responsibilities expected of working-class wives meant that sitting on committees or attending public meetings were often not possible due to the time commitments associated with their domestic responsibilities.

In terms of women who belonged to an elevated social class, Deirdre Beddoe highlights the case of Margaret Haig Mackworth (1883–1958), a woman who, as Beddoe puts it, 'broke every taboo of her [social] class' in her quest for women's rights. Margaret, who was the daughter of the Liberal MP David Alfred Thomas and who later became the second Viscountess Rhondda upon his death, became involved in the dissemination and organisation of the WSPU's campaign in Wales.<sup>28</sup> In particular, Lady Rhondda (as she was also known) organised the first meeting of the WSPU branch in Newport. Moreover, she was involved as a militant; she attacked the car of Prime Minister Herbert Asquith (1852–1928) during the 1910 General Election and, in 1913, she was imprisoned for attempting to destroy a pillar box on Newport's Risca Road with a chemical bomb. Such behaviour in the early Edwardian era was so far removed from the domestic

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<sup>26</sup> Beddoe (2004), p.3.

<sup>27</sup> Cook and Evans, p.159. Of course, there were exceptions to this generalisation. For example, Elizabeth Andrews (1882–1960) a native of Penderyn, Glamorgan, was the eldest daughter of a mining family. Her interest in public debate was sparked in 1904 when she wrote a letter in support of the religious revival (1904–5) to a local newspaper. Following the publication of the letter which provoked a strong reaction from the local community, Andrews joined the campaign for women's suffrage. She became well-known in later years not for her involvement in this campaign, but rather for providing (with two other women) evidence to the Sankey Commission in 1918 to highlight the need for pithead baths to be installed at mines, a plea that was later answered successfully. For more information on the revival, see James Deaville and Katherine Stopa, "'Singin' in the Reign": Voice, Faith and the Welsh Revival of 1904–1905', in Martin V. Clarke (ed.), *Music and Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp.117–131.

<sup>28</sup> The first Viscountess Rhondda was Margaret's mother, Sybil Margaret Thomas (née Haig) (1857–1941) who had gained the title when her husband was elevated to the peerage in 1916. Like her daughter, Sybil was deeply interested in campaigning for women's suffrage and was equally willing to participate in and support militant strategies in order to achieve it.

ideology promoted to women in Victorian Britain. In her autobiography, Margaret explained the reason for her involvement:

One sometimes hears people who took part in the suffrage campaign pitied [...] But for me, and for many other young women like me, militant suffrage was the very salt of life. The knowledge of it had come like a draught of fresh air into our paddled, stifled lives. It gave us release of energy, it gave us that sense of being some use in the scheme of things [...] It made us feel that we were part of life, not just outside watching it. It made us feel that we had a real purpose and use apart from having children [...] It gave us hope of freedom and power and opportunity. It gave us scope at last, and it gave us what normal healthy use craves – adventure and excitement.<sup>29</sup>

Here, Margaret's testimony serves to reinforce the notion that women's involvement in the suffrage movement, at least for some, represented a conscious contestation of the image of the Victorian 'angel in the house'. In this respect, it should be noted also that female suffrage campaigners were afforded the opportunity to speak publically to audiences and to lead debates in local communities. However, such speakers – particularly those associated with militant strategies – were not always received favourably. At a meeting held in Newport's Temperance Hall for which Emmeline Pankhurst and others were engaged to speak (organised by the Newport branch of the WSPU), the speakers were 'pelted with rotten eggs' and were subsequently 'forced to take refuge in the women's waiting room of the railway station'.<sup>30</sup>

In opposition to the militant suffragettes was a group of suffragists who preferred to adopt strategies that steadily increased public knowledge of their mission without the aid of militancy. In 1897, the largest organisation campaigning for women to achieve the vote by constitutional means was founded in England when a number of organisations were merged. The new organisation, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (hereafter called the NUWSS), was led by Millicent Fawcett (1847–1929), a Suffolk-born suffragist who had an established reputation in the field of women's education. Like the militant organisations, non-

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Wallace, pp.68–69.

<sup>30</sup> Cook and Evans, p.173.

militant societies were also established in Wales. One of the most prominent, however, was the Cardiff and District Women's Suffrage Society (hereafter called the CDWSS) which was formed in July 1908 under the leadership of Mrs Henry Lewis of Tongwynlais (see Plate 1.5). Despite Mrs Lewis being a supporter of the Conservative Party, the society was not affiliated to any political parties but was, however, linked to the parent organisation, the NUWSS. Moreover, the society was open to men and women who proposed that both sexes should have the same voting rights.



**Plate 1.5:** Members of the CDWSS marching in Cathays Park, 1913<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Photograph reproduced from the NMW website <[www.museumwales.ac.uk](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk)> [accessed 15 April 2015]. Mrs Henry Lewis is positioned centre left. Although not evident in the print, the women in the background were wearing the colours associated with the Women's Suffrage Movement; purple to represent the royal blood flowing through their veins, white for purity and green to represent hope and spring. The colours were adopted by both militant and non-militant campaigners.

The location of the society in Cardiff is significant. Cardiff was undergoing significant developments in the first decade of the twentieth century; the recently-founded University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire (now Cardiff University) was expanding in Cathays Park (the Main Building was completed in 1911), City Hall formed a central focus of the new Civic Centre and plans were in motion to create the country's first National Museum following a royal charter obtained in 1907. Moreover, it represented a time when the concept of a distinctive Welsh identity was recognised not only as a marker for individuals but as something to be performed by the masses. However, the focus on nationhood existed both as a form of self-identification and as a symbol of the country's development; on 28 October 1905, Cardiff, which contained the world's largest coal exporting port, was officially granted city status by King Edward VII (although it was another 50 years until it was recognised as the capital city of Wales).

The relationship between a burgeoning sense of nationhood for the people of Wales and their part in (or reaction to) the wider issue of women's suffrage was not easily negotiated. This was especially true of the attacks upon Lloyd George, in particular those that occurred at national *eisteddfodau*. At the National Eisteddfod held in Wrexham in 1912, persistent interruptions to Lloyd George's address by suffragettes invoked angry reactions from the other members in the crowd. According to one report in the press, 'the police were helpless to protect their charges from the infuriated mass [...] each of the women were smacked on the face, each one lost her hat, each one had bundles of hair torn ruthlessly from their root, and each one suffered indignities'.<sup>32</sup> Later the same month (September 1912), a warning discouraging the attendance of suffragettes was published prior to Lloyd George presenting an address in his native home, Llanystumdwy, a village on the Llŷn Peninsula in Gwynydd (North Wales). However, the plea was made in vain.

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<sup>32</sup> *Western Mail*, 6 September 1912. Quoted in Wallace, p.96.

Violence directed towards the serving Chancellor at national events had an earlier precedent; at the National Eisteddfod held at Royal Albert Hall in London in June 1909, a dozen suffragettes were ejected from the venue. Acknowledging the disruption, Lloyd George ironically asked ‘*A oes heddwch?*’ (English, ‘and is there peace?’), a question that has been historically asked as part of the Gorsedd of the Bards ceremony, while the women were escorted out of the hall.<sup>33</sup> Moreover the use of the Welsh language and the suffrage campaign was highlighted. Despite the suffragettes carrying posters marked with the words ‘*Pleidlais i ferched*’ (English, ‘Vote for Women’), Lloyd George stated (in Welsh): ‘For all that poor woman knows I may now be speaking in advocacy of women’s suffrage. Pity somebody did not teach them Welsh; it might help to civilize them’.<sup>34</sup> Here, Lloyd George’s statement not only highlights the notion that the suffrage campaign was perceived to be spearheaded by Anglophone women (either Welsh or English), but more importantly suggests that the advancement of a civilized, Welsh society and the plight for women’s voting rights were mutually exclusive. Supporting this view, the *Daily Mail* explained that for ‘men from the quarries, the hills and the pastures [...] Mr Lloyd George [was] something more than a man, to [them] he [was] a national institution’.<sup>35</sup> Once again, we must wonder: where are the (musical) women of Harlech?

## Engendering Wales

While this chapter has thus far detailed instances of Welsh masculinity through music (in print and in press), an examination of the suffrage movement in Wales showed that women, too, were involved in the political sphere.<sup>36</sup> In the following section, I will uncover the cultural contexts in which gendered identities were fashioned in Wales. Although a country firmly part of the United Kingdom, Wales has maintained a distinct form of cultural identity since it came under English

<sup>33</sup> *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 25 June 1909.

<sup>34</sup> *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 25 June 1909. The original Welsh text was not published.

<sup>35</sup> *Daily Mail*, 21 September 1912. Quoted in Wallace, p.97.

<sup>36</sup> It is worth remembering here that Llewellyn’s novel was published in 1939, several decades after the suffrage movement of the early twentieth century, and it promoted an earlier stereotyped vision of the Welsh woman.

rule in 1282. In this matter, the people of Wales have shown a strong determination to reflect their own sense of what it is to be Welsh within the framework of a larger English hegemonic structure. Crucial here was the use of the Welsh language. Welsh is an archaic language closely linked with the native forms of communication used in Brittany and Cornwall; they are known collectively as the P-Celtic Brythonic languages, while Manx, Scots and Irish Gaelic are considered to be Q-Celtic Goidelic languages. However, the continued use of the native language in Wales has not occurred without difficulties. In particular, increasing pressures have been placed upon the people of Wales throughout the centuries from their Anglophone leaders, especially in the realms of religion, government and education.

During the nineteenth century, children heard speaking in Welsh in some schools were shamed with a wooden sign placed around their neck (known as the Welsh Not or Welsh Note), which would be passed to the next child who spoke the language; the child wearing the placard at the end of the day was subjected to physical punishment in the form of a lashing with a cane. Such matters regarding language are still pertinent in education today. While the Welsh Not harshly discouraged the use of the native language in the classroom setting, learning Welsh is now a compulsory part of school education in Wales irrespective of whether a child is residing in a monoglot or a bilingual area. Moreover, proficiency in Welsh has an ability to wield a form of political power since employment opportunities in government roles as well as those in the heritage sectors are often earmarked for individuals who can speak Welsh fluently.

In terms of national identity, however, it is interesting to consider not only the place of Wales within the United Kingdom, but also within the larger context of Europe. As R. Merfyn Jones noted in 1992, the concept of creating *l'Europe des regions* was a notion that promised not only collective power for 'a wider federal Europe' but also power for individual countries since governmental responsibilities were to be handed 'downward to the devolved regions'.<sup>37</sup> He argues, in particular, that leaders debated how their nations could define a broad European

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<sup>37</sup> R. Merfyn Jones, 'Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh', *Journal of British Studies*, 31/4 (1992), p.330.

identity while maintaining a sense of native belonging. Here, Merfyn Jones highlights that some nations have managed to do just that – namely the Welsh and the Scots; both have preserved their own form of national identity for centuries despite not possessing the power to make governmental decisions. Of course, the situation has changed since the time Merfyn Jones was writing in the early 1990s; in 1997, a Welsh Assembly was founded and a building constructed when Wales became a devolved nation. In 1999, Scotland followed suit when a Scottish Parliament was formed and built.

The question of Welsh identity for the people of Wales did not have to be raised in the same way as it did for the English or for the French. Moreover, Welsh identity (or perhaps identities) is perceived *ipso facto* by the Welsh themselves and also by visitors to Wales.<sup>38</sup> Historically it has been English travellers in Wales who have observed the facets of Welsh identity – the language, the culture, and in some cases, the geography – before disseminating their newly-found information in printed books, such as George Borrow's *Wild Wales* (1862). Here, Borrow (1803–1881) presents a romanticised account of his experiences while travelling through Wales; Borrow follows in the wake of other English writers at the time who idealised the Celtic unknown. Although such publications relied upon a literate audience in the nineteenth century (a fact that meant a knowledge of Wales and of 'the Welsh' were restricted to those who could read), an account published by Trevor Fishlock in 1972 suggests that the concept of Welsh identity was still not fully understood in England despite its neighbouring location. Fishlock, a writer who was sent to explore Wales in 1968, admits that he 'knew nothing of [Wales'] history, [and] little of its geography. At school [he was] told that "Wales=coal"' and nothing more.<sup>39</sup> From this standpoint, it is unsurprising that Wales remained 'an attractive enigma' not only for Fishlock but for others too.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.331.

<sup>39</sup> Trevor Fishlock, *Wales and the Welsh* (London: Cassell, 1992), p.vii.

<sup>40</sup> Fishlock, p.1.

However, Fishlock reiterates a standard representation of Wales that had been fashioned in the past and replicated in his present. Of significance here is his recognition that music making was inextricably associated with national identity. For example, he notes that ‘it is true that Welshmen sing like angels, [...] compete and dress up in *eisteddfodau*, [...] and] pluck harps’.<sup>41</sup> From his account, it is clear that music has an important role in the shaping of a gendered conception of nationhood in the country. Here, the relationship will be further explored with reference to the extant scholarly literature.

### **Laying the Foundations: Examining the Literature**

The combination of the three principal strands of this thesis, namely gender, identity and choral singing have not yet been comprehensively documented in musicology or theorised in ethnomusicology with specific reference to the musical traditions of Wales. Although some academic studies referencing Welsh choral singing in the relevant period (1872–1918) have emerged, the relationship between music and gender remains particularly underexplored. Here, I will present an overview of the relevant literature beginning with general sources in Welsh music before discussing pertinent developments in ethnomusicology.

#### On Welsh Music

Although Wales has gained a reputation for being a ‘land of song’ in particular, and has nurtured in its people a love of, and skill in, musical performance in general, critical studies examining the relationship between music and the people of Wales have been disproportionately low. What could be termed ‘standard’ literature on music in Wales appeared first in the mid-twentieth century with the publication in 1948 of *Impressions of Music in Wales* by J. Sutcliffe Smith and *Music in Wales* edited by Peter Crossley-Holland. As the title of the first suggests it was concerned primarily with the description of musical practices occurring in Wales at this time. Sutcliffe

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



Smith, a Doctor of Music who is titled as an ‘impartial observer’ in the book’s foreword (written by D. E. Parry Williams, the musical director of Bangor University College), had previously published accounts of music in Yorkshire (1928) and Birmingham (1945). Here, his publication (which is structured as a series of letters to a Keith Conyers, Esq. of Yorkshire), is based upon available literature, experiences gained through travel and the results of interviews with participants.

Both Sutcliffe Smith’s account of music in Wales and the edited collection by Peter Crossley-Holland seem to have been written with a similar audience in mind. Reinforcing the idea that little is known about Welsh music, or indeed the cultural traditions surrounding it in Wales, both expressed the advantage that such studies would make in terms of understanding in England; the comparison with Fishlock is undeniably evident here, although the studies discussed preceded the Fishlock publication by 24 years. In particular, Sutcliffe Smith stated that the aim of his impressions was ‘to [give or help] Englishmen and others who shall read them [a] better understanding as to the reasons for the apparent backwardness of Welsh music in certain directions, and at the same time to [show] that the Welsh people are intensely musical with a long ancestry of poetry and song’.<sup>42</sup> However, he does not divulge any further information on what the ‘apparent backwardness’ of Welsh music may be.

On first inspection, Peter Crossley-Holland’s edited collection on *Music in Wales* appears to present a more factual approach to the subject, with chapters on musical instruments, the Welsh Folk-Song Society, the National Eisteddfod, music and education (in schools and in universities) and the relationship between music and religion in Wales, amongst others. However, it is clear that the motive once more is driven by a desire to provide a publication that will serve the needs of Englishmen; the initial paragraph of Crossley-Holland’s preface states that ‘the majority of Englishmen know little or nothing of musical life in Wales. [...] The present work

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<sup>42</sup> J. Sutcliffe Smith, *Impressions of Music in Wales* (Penmaenmawr: Venture Press, 1948), p.13.

seeks to provide a general introduction'.<sup>43</sup> He explains his position further by highlighting the fact that a book devoted entirely to Welsh music had not previously existed, and interestingly, that focussed studies which had been published in Welsh were 'denied to the average English reader'.<sup>44</sup> While Crossley-Holland raises an important point about language here, he fails to make the distinction between English-speaking Welsh people and the English.

Choral singing, in particular, is discussed in two chapters of Crossley-Holland's publication. Here, the developments in the tradition are detailed in chronological order from the mid-nineteenth century to the time of writing; pertinent topics include the rise of nonconformity, the *eisteddfod* (pl. *eisteddfodau*) (a secular, competitive festival of music and poetry), the *gymanfa ganu* (a psalmody festival), the rise of choral singing in Welsh schools and universities and musical funding for choirs and *eisteddfodau*. Despite the objective tone of this edited volume, a subjective register is proffered by a contributing author, the educator and conductor W. R. Allen (1891–1956).<sup>45</sup> Here, Allen states that 'Wales must take her singing more seriously, and not rest on her laurels, if her choral tradition is to be maintained'.<sup>46</sup> Although this argument is placed within the framework of a historical account of Welsh music, Allen's remarks offer clues about how choral practice was being performed in the mid-twentieth century. For example, he complains that choristers in Cardiganshire had become musically illiterate. He also bemoaned the emphasis upon popular numbers rather than Welsh repertoire during the competitive sections of the *eisteddfod*, the author advocating the promotion of Welsh composers in this context.

Nevertheless, Allen confirms that choral singing was popular at the time of writing and he provides a list of 105 active choirs (mixed, male and female) throughout Wales.

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Crossley-Holland, 'Preface' in Peter Crossley-Holland (ed.), *Music in Wales* (London: Hinrichsen, 1948), p.iii.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> W. R. Allen was the conductor of the University College Choral Society in Aberystwyth.

<sup>46</sup> W. R. Allen, 'The Choral Tradition', in Peter Crossley-Holland (ed.), p.37. Here, the gendering of the nation as feminine is noteworthy; Wales is often described as female. Barra Boydell has made a similar observation with respect to Ireland. Exploring the iconography of the harp, Boydell significantly notes that the harp – once considered a masculine instrument – became feminine during the eighteenth century. For Boydell, the 'winged-maiden' harp came to represent the subjugation of Ireland, a masculine nation rendered feminine through colonisation and subjugation. See Barra Boydell, 'The Iconography of the Irish Harp as a National Symbol', in Patrick F. Devine and Harry White (eds), *The Maynooth International Musicological Conference 1995: Selected Proceedings Part Two* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), pp.131–145.

Although the studies mentioned are noteworthy for their introductory coverage, the first scholarly studies of music on Wales did not appear until the millennial decade. For example, Sally Harper's monograph on *Music in Welsh Culture Before 1650* (2007) is particularly significant since it aims to dispel a popular misconception that 'too little material survives to enable coherent study' of music in Wales before 1650, and that 'obscure' surviving sources are 'unworthy of serious scholarly attention'.<sup>47</sup> Invoking an ethnographic approach to explore historical sources, Harper attempts to make sense of anthropological issues (such as oral transmission, musical enculturation and literate representation) as they relate to the historical record. Interestingly, Harper does not anticipate (historical) ethnomusicologists to feature within her expected readership.

In terms of the musical practices discussed, Harper's focus is fixed predominantly on instrumental practices. Here, she provides an in-depth analysis not only of *cerdd dant* (English, 'the craft of the string') in general, a genre played on the harp and the *crwth* (a bowed lute), but also of specific written sources related to the tradition, such as the seventeenth-century harp manuscript created by Robert ap Huw of Anglesey as an act of 'retrospective preservation'.<sup>48</sup> However, Harper is principally concerned with instrumental music during the Medieval period. As such, her study complements (but does not replicate) information presented in this thesis. That being said, Harper does consider (in the later chapters 20 and 21) congregational singing in Wales during the post-Reformation period, especially with respect to questions that concern the use of the Welsh language in liturgical publications. Since choral singing in Wales expanded rapidly during the nineteenth-century, Harper's work provides an important precedent and a significant framework for discussing music and religion (see Chapter 2).

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<sup>47</sup> Sally Harper, *Music in Welsh Culture Before 1650: A Study of the Principal Sources* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.1. For a more detailed discussion of this important publication, see Rachelle Barlow, Review of *Music in Welsh Culture Before 1650: A Study of the Principal Sources*, by Sally Harper, *Ethnomusicology*, 55/3 (2011), pp.511–516.

<sup>48</sup> For further information about the Robert ap Huw manuscript and other Welsh harp tablature, see Harper (2007), pp.135–159.

Phyllis Kinney has more recently written a scholarly study of traditional music in Wales. Entitled *Welsh Traditional Music*, Kinney contributes to equivalent studies on traditional musics in neighbouring Celtic traditions (such as Ireland and Scotland) which were written much earlier. It is surprising therefore that a comprehensive publication on traditional music in Wales did not exist before 2011 (the date of Kinney's monograph). Here, it is interesting to consider a personal note. Kinney is an American-born singer who moved to Wales to settle down with her husband, the now late Dr. Meredydd Evans, a Welsh singer, researcher, language activist and lifetime conscientious objector. Kinney developed an interest in Welsh folksong when she was shown the aforementioned collection by Brinley Richards (*The Songs of Wales*) by a Welsh college professor working in Michigan State University. Upon further investigation, Kinney soon realised that little had been written in English on the general topic of Welsh traditional music since it required proficiency in the Welsh language, a skill that was not readily possessed by many musicologists. At the time, this proficiency also eluded Kinney, although she has since become fluent.

Utilising primary materials in the Welsh language, the scope of Kinney's important monograph ranges from music performed in the Medieval period to music performed in the twentieth century. However, her discussion (or lack thereof) of gender, is of most interest to the present study. In particular, Kinney documents a Christmas morning *phygain*<sup>49</sup> service in which carols were performed as solos, duets, trios or by small groups of the congregation. Although Kinney notes that such singing was 'not entirely a male prerogative', the elevated popularity of the male trio (with the melody sung in the middle part) is highlighted but not interrogated.<sup>50</sup> Further, she evades a discussion of gender in her consideration of carol texts with 'feminine

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<sup>49</sup> There is no literal English translation for the word *phygain*, although it derives from the Latin *pulli cantus* or 'cock crow' since the services were typically held between three and six o'clock on Christmas morning. For further information on *phygain* and the carolling tradition in Wales, see Kinney, 'Carols, Ballads and the *Anterllyn*', in Kinney, pp.105–126.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.108.

endings'.<sup>51</sup> Again, she fails to document the significance of gender in relation to the rise of congregational singing during the nineteenth century in Wales. Here, Kinney avoids a consideration of the social (and thereby the engendered) in the musical since her definition of 'traditional music' follows Harper (who wrote the Introduction). According to this definition, first, traditional music is primarily transmitted by oral or aural methods; second, traditional music is connected to 'a distinct people or region'; third, traditional music utilises variation as 'an intrinsic feature'; and fourth, traditional music is perceived to be 'a *living* musical tradition'.<sup>52</sup> Since congregational music or communal music in Victorian Wales (the distinction is marked by a difference in performance context, sacred for the former and secular for the latter) was often transmitted by other means (for example, by musical notation or by tonic sol-fa), extensive discussion of choral ensembles is not featured extensively in Kinney's important publication.

On the other hand, Gareth Williams deals extensively with the notion of chorus and community. Entitled *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales, 1840–1914*, he evaluates music from a social perspective especially as it relates to industrial development and religious change. Williams' book is perhaps the closest to the present study in terms of its immediate subject matter and the specific time period referenced (although this thesis focuses on a shorter period between 1872 and 1918). Responding to the need for more studies focussed on local communities in Wales (especially South Wales), Williams presents (or rather 'recovers') a valuable account of 'some of the enormous musical vitality of [the] south Wales valleys, from oratorio to amateur opera, from drum-and-fife bands to working-class orchestras from temperance anthems to the palace of varieties'.<sup>53</sup>

Williams is not alone in providing a cultural reading of 'grass-roots' performance in contemporary scholarship. Here, he emulates similar studies of amateur music making, especially in folklore. Significantly, he follows in the footsteps of Ruth Finnegan who wrote a ground

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.110.

<sup>52</sup> Sally Harper, 'Introduction', in Kinney, p.xvii. Italics are reproduced from the original source.

<sup>53</sup> Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales, 1840–1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), p.5.

breaking study (in 1989) of the ‘hidden musicians’ in Milton Keynes during the 1980s. In this book, Finnegan highlights the value of conducting research in a range of musical contexts (including church choirs, amateur choirs, operatic societies and brass bands amongst others), so that researchers can uncover the significance of ‘what people actually *do*’ to engage with music in local communities.<sup>54</sup> In contrast to previous studies, she rejects the value placed on scholarship devoted to canonical figures or professional musicians. While Finnegan uncovers the narratives of amateur musicians through ethnographic research, Williams utilises historical sources to reveal their narratives in the past. Here, the present study straddles the two approaches since it uses the method of historical ethnography to expose the historic past in the ethnographic present (see below).

While Williams’ publication is closely linked to this thesis in terms of subject matter and time frame, there is one area in which the two studies reflect opposing interests: that is, in terms of gender. For reasons stated in the Preface, considerations of how gender not only shaped the development of the choral tradition in Wales throughout the nineteenth century but also how male choirs especially came to represent an iconic vision of musical heritage and masculinity in the twentieth and twenty first centuries are paramount to understanding fully the development of singing in Wales. Williams confesses to be ‘less interested in the construction of specific gender identities than in the more general process of cultural production’.<sup>55</sup> Responding specifically to a critique that his previous work on sport, economy and society in Wales reflected a ‘brazen male intellectual bias’, Williams states here that he is ‘well aware’ of successful female choirs in Wales.<sup>56</sup> However, this information is not critically assessed since it occupies just one sentence in

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<sup>54</sup> Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2007), p.6.

<sup>55</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.4.

<sup>56</sup> The comment was made in David Andrews, ‘Sport and the Masculine Hegemony of the Modern Nation: Welsh Rugby, Culture and Society, 1890–1914’, in John Nauright and Timothy J. L. Chandler (eds), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity* (London; Portland: Frank Cass, 1996), pp.50–69. The work that Andrews was referring to was by Gareth Williams, ‘From Grand Slam to Great Slump: Economy, Society and Rugby Football in Wales during the Depression’, *Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru/Welsh History Review*, 11/3 (1983), pp.338–357. It is apparent that Williams later modified his approach to gender in Welsh choral music since a later publication features an extended (although still marginal) discussion of female choirs. Here, he comments in particular on the dress codes utilised by choristers in

the 200-page narrative of his study, Williams noting there the international successes of the female choir conducted by Madame Clara Novello Davies. Here, I contend that the few references to female choirs and choristers in Williams' monograph is based on a personal prejudice and not on the evidence available (although admittedly there are more documentary materials on male choirs rather than female choirs in Welsh music).

### On Gender Scholarship

The scholarly literature on gender, particularly in ethnomusicology, is substantial and stems in large from Ellen Koskoff's edited collection entitled *Women in Cross-Cultural Performance* (1987), a seminal work that represented the first book implicitly centred on gender, music and ethnomusicology.<sup>57</sup> Seeking answers to questions on how a society's gender ideology was able to affect musical thought and practice as well as how music functioned in society to reflect or affect gendered relations, Koskoff's collection was positioned culturally amid the rise of second wave feminism and academically alongside the emergence of feminist anthropology.<sup>58</sup> In terms of the latter, the notion of male bias became increasingly apparent in the late 1970s and concerns over how women were represented in ethnographic studies were especially raised. It was realised that both male and female fieldworkers tended to favour the input of male informants, since men were generally more accessible as they occupied public social positions and were thus understood to be more representative of the society as a whole.<sup>59</sup> The early development of ethnomusicological fieldwork was also guilty of propagating such unbalanced views. To combat

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pre-1900 national *eisteddfodau*. See Williams, "How's the Tenors in Dowlais"? The Choral Culture of the South Wales Coalfield c.1880–1930', *Trafodion Anrhydeddus Gymdeithas y Cymmrodorion/Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 11 (2005), pp.170–188.

<sup>57</sup> Ellen Koskoff (ed.), *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

<sup>58</sup> Concerns about gender and society were not limited to the disciplines of anthropology and ethnomusicology. One of the landmark publications in musicology, for example, was *Cecilia Reclaimed* (1994), a collection of ten essays edited by Susan Cook and Judy Tsou. While many of the authors are here called musicologists (with the exception of Jennifer Post), the influence of ethnomusicology is evident in terms of the theoretical concerns raised and the research methodologies implied. Among the subjects discussed in the volume are rap music, American ballads, and the courtesan tradition in Vienna and seventeenth-century music in France.

<sup>59</sup> Ellen Koskoff, *A Feminist Ethnomusicology: Writings on Music and Gender* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014), p.21.

this oversight, feminist anthropology, and later what could be called a ‘feminist ethnomusicology’ (see below), sought to dispel the notion of male bias by bringing to the fore separate analytical categories for men and for women. Here, Koskoff importantly makes the distinction between sex (man or woman) and gender (masculine or feminine); the former is biologically given and the latter is socially constructed (and thus culture-specific).

Although Koskoff first presented her ideas on music and gender in the late 1980s, her arguments remain valid in the contemporary field of ethnomusicology. Her most recent monograph entitled *A Feminist Ethnomusicology* (published in 2014) is styled as ‘an intellectual memoir’ in which Koskoff retraces the emergence of feminist thought in ethnomusicology (as detailed above) and outlines its development through three distinctive time periods: first, 1976–1990; second, 1990–2000; and third, 2000–2012. Calling upon her fieldwork on the music of the Lubavitcher Hasidim, Koskoff provides here a candid discussion of important issues such as the relationship between gender, music and power, and a consideration of the ongoing insider/outsider debate.<sup>60</sup> For example, Koskoff identifies as a secular Jew (her parents are Jewish yet she does not frequently engage in religious practice), but her newly-found feminist consciousness appears to be misaligned with the strict codes of behaviour expected of Lubavitcher women.

I find especially valuable her final section on unresolved issues in gendered ethnomusicology in the post-millennial era. Here, she questions why more studies dealing with gender have emerged in musicology than in ethnomusicology. One of her reasons for this is because ethnomusicology has become increasingly concerned with how musics have been globalised through commodification and politics. Crucially, studies such as Mark Slobin’s *Subcultural Sounds* (1993) and Timothy D. Taylor’s *Global Pop* (1997) marked a transition from the methodology of fieldwork (the technique historically favoured by ethnomusicologists) to the collection of text-based data and the theorisation of ideas in terms of cultural studies (following

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<sup>60</sup> The Lubavitcher Hasidim is a group of ultra-orthodox Jews based in the Crown Heights area of Brooklyn, New York. See also Koskoff, *Music in Lubavitcher Life* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001).



the process of so-called ‘new musicologists’).<sup>61</sup> She notes, however, that a consideration of gender rarely forms part of the central discussion.<sup>62</sup>

Following the precedent set by Koskoff in the late 1980s, however, several important studies regarding how gender affected music-making, and conversely how music-making affected gendered ideologies have emerged in the field of ethnomusicology. Here, Jane Sugarman’s book *Engendering Song: Singing & Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings* (1997) is a landmark publication since it addresses the pertinent issues of gender, music (especially song) and performativity using extensive ethnographic data gathered in the context of Prespa Albanian weddings.<sup>63</sup> Recognising that music provides a unique locus for interrogating the construction of gendered identities, Sugarman argues that ‘so long as we operate within gendered social worlds, gender [will be] intrinsic to our musical performances, and any musical performance [will] thus also [be] a performance of gender’.<sup>64</sup> Crucially, she also proposes that music performances should be examined not only for their ability to ‘reinforce gender relations within other domains but [also] to actively *engender* those individuals who perform in them’.<sup>65</sup> Sugarman’s argument is grounded theoretically by drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ (in which social structures and symbolic forms of behaviour are internalised within individuals) and Michel Foucault’s

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<sup>61</sup> Koskoff divides the study of musicology in two strands: first, ‘old’ musicology (1970s) which is based on older models from literature and history, genre and masterwork studies (few studies on sex and/or gender); second, ‘new’ musicology (1980s/90s) which is based on new models from history and literature such as literary criticism, cultural studies, queer theory (many studies on sex and/or gender). In particular, see diagram 1, Koskoff (2014), p.177.

<sup>62</sup> Koskoff (2014), p.178.

<sup>63</sup> The notion of performativity was first theorised by Judith Butler in her seminal publication, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). Here, Butler collapses the notions of sex and gender to suggest that all bodies are gendered through social interactions and that the idea of a ‘natural body’ does not exist. Instead, Butler argues that gender is not something one is, but rather something one does; it is performative. She explains, ‘gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being’ (p.25). There is an important distinction to be made here, however, between performance and performativity. According to Butler, the former presupposes a pre-existing subject while the latter contests the very notion of the subject. This theory has been adapted for ethnomusicological purposes by Sugarman; for her, performance reflects a staged demonstration of identities through music whereas as a focus on performativity enables an emphasis on gesture, the unspoken discourse and the emergence of subjectivities.

<sup>64</sup> Jane C. Sugarman, *Engendering Song: Singing & Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p.32.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

concept of ‘discourses’ (in which spoken or printed words are interrogated to reveal relations of power).<sup>66</sup>

Although Sugarman deals with the music of men and women equally, studies dealing exclusively with masculinity also emerged in line with the development of feminist studies. By countering the earlier male bias in the disciplines of anthropology and ethnomusicology, early accounts that sought to redress the imbalance by providing ethnographic accounts of women’s music (such studies are sometimes called ‘compensatory history’) understandably did not address how performed masculinities affected music-making. In this matter, it was falsely assumed that studies which promoted men’s music as representative of the whole society had addressed such concerns. Influenced by, and responding to feminist criticism, men began to critique their own positions within ‘patriarchal institutions’ as they endeavoured to promote images of ‘non-sexist masculinities’ across a range of disciplines.<sup>67</sup> In his study on music and male hegemony, John Shepherd argues that the parameters of ‘classical’ and ‘popular’ music (namely timbre, pitch and rhythm) can be correlated with male hegemonic practices concerning cultural reproduction and gender typing. In particular, he proposes that music – the physical manifestation of sound – constitutes a threat to male hegemony, a form of domination over women which is constructed visually (not sonically) and relies upon a degree of social separation and silence. Shepherd points out that music, on the other hand, is ‘potentially threatening to men’ as it ‘insists on the social

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<sup>66</sup> It is necessary to mention here a number of landmark publications on music and gender that have emerged in musicology and ethnomusicology. First, Susan McClary’s book *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (1991) examined a range of repertoire (including Western art music and also icons of popular music such as Madonna) to uncover the ways in which musical discourse is gendered, critiquing in particular the subordination of women in musical terminology (such as the ‘feminine ending’ which occurs on a weak beat). In her monograph entitled *Deconstructive Variations* (1996), Rose Subotnik explores further the notions of gender in Western art music as she presents a post-structuralist reading of gendered identities in the music of Chopin, Schoenberg and Stravinsky especially.

<sup>67</sup> Rachel Adams and David Savran, ‘Introduction’, in Rachel Adams and David Savran (eds), *The Masculinity Studies Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), p.4. In terms of alternative masculinities and their manifestation in music, Philip Brett’s conference paper on sexuality in Britten’s opera *Peter Grimes* (presented at the American Musicological Society annual conference in 1976) was pioneering since it prompted the emergence of gay studies in musicology. Brett’s antiessentialist approach to homosexuality was shaped by Foucault who advocated that sexuality was not a fixed entity but rather a product of discursive actions. For a further discussion of how sexuality affects music-making, see Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary C. Thomas (eds), *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (New York: Routledge, 1994). See also Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980).

relatedness of human worlds and as a consequence implicitly demands that individuals respond'.<sup>68</sup> Here, neither women nor men can be silent.

Another important contribution to the scholarly literature on music and masculinity is Gage Averill's book entitled *Four Parts, No Waiting: A Social History of American Barbershop Harmony* (2003). As its title suggests, Averill is concerned primarily with the tradition of barbershop singing in the United States which, as Averill puts it, represents 'a peculiar manifestation of American male musical fellowship or camaraderie'.<sup>69</sup> Although the type of ensemble with which Averill is concerned (a vocal quartet) differs considerably in terms of size from the massed choirs produced in the industrialised South Wales Valleys, he raises a number of important themes regarding the study of male vocal performance. Such themes include sociability, community formation through music, and, perhaps most important in terms of the present study, a concept of feeling that is 'imagined in the present and amplified by nostalgia' of the past.<sup>70</sup>

However, Averill is not the first to consider such issues in ethnomusicology. In a study predating her book *Engendering Song* by a decade, Sugarman examines how Prespa Albanian men living in North America use singing to make *muabet*, meaning 'to induce an atmosphere of intimacy and openness at a social gathering'.<sup>71</sup> Here, singing, which is believed to be more effective than speech in this context, not only reflects culture-specific aesthetic preferences but also a form of social organisation. At informal events held within the home from dusk, Sugarman notes that the singing is initiated by an older member of the household and that the following sequence of singers is determined by age from oldest to youngest. Fuelled by the consumption of alcohol, singing distinguishes the event from everyday behaviour while ensuring that concepts of a moral order are also observed. Crucial in such events, however, is the engagement in social interchange. Sugarman argues that Prespa men sing, above all, to

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<sup>68</sup> John Shepherd, 'Music and Male Hegemony', in Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (eds), *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), p.158.

<sup>69</sup> Gage Averill, *Four Parts, No Waiting: A Social History of American Barbershop Harmony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.3.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>71</sup> Sugarman, 'Making *Muabet*: The Social Basis of Singing Among Prespa Albanian Men', *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology*, 7 (1987), p.1.

‘experience themselves interacting as a close and cohesive community’.<sup>72</sup> This factor is increasingly important for Prespa communities living in diasporic settings, for whom the egalitarianism of the traditional Prespa way of life is challenged by ‘improved economic conditions’, individualism and ‘materialistic competitiveness’.<sup>73</sup> Singing to make *muabet* enables the participants here to reaffirm the ideology of their social order.

### On Choral Performance

As a study of the social formation of choral performance, Sugarman set a precedent for other ethnomusicologists. In particular, Veit Erlmann conducted research on a genre of Zulu music, a choral style called *isicathamiya* performed by men in South Africa. Erlmann shows not only how music and masculinity intersect but also how such music is affected by broader social trends, such as labour migration. Here, Erlmann is especially concerned with the relationship between song structure and social structure as he unpacks the significance of song texts for delineating the experiences of migrant workers and, in particular, how their lives are shaped in an increasingly urban environment. He argues that *isicathamiya* represents the ‘articulation of South African black migrants’ heterogeneous worlds’.<sup>74</sup> Since Erlmann is interested also in discussing the historical underpinnings of the vocal tradition (which emerged in the late nineteenth century) as well as viewing male choral performance as a site where male bonding could be and was enacted, there are obvious connections between his work and my own approach to choral performance. As a matter of clarification, it should be highlighted that my aims are two-fold:

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.31.

<sup>73</sup> Sugarman (1987), p.31.

<sup>74</sup> Veit Erlmann, ‘Migration and Performance: Zulu Migrant Workers’ Isicathamiya Performance in South Africa, 1890–1950’, *Ethnomusicology*, 34/2 (1990), 202. See also Erlmann, *Nightsong: Performance, Power and Practice in South Africa* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1996). It should be noted that the study of music and masculinity in South Africa has not been limited to male researchers in terms of either interest or fieldwork practicalities. For example, in 2004, Louise Meintjes published a research paper that examined the production of masculinity in a Zulu song genre called *ngoma*. Here, she argued that in the context of mass unemployment, an AIDS epidemic and violence in post-Apartheid South Africa, performing *ngoma* was a ‘critical means [of] attaining responsible manhood’. See Louise Meintjes, ‘Shoot the Sergeant, Shatter the Mountain: The Production of Masculinity in Zulu Ngoma Song and Dance in post-Apartheid South Africa’, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 13/2 (2004), pp.173–201.

first, to uncover the ‘hidden’ or marginalised participation of females within the Welsh choral tradition; and second, to trace the development of male-only singing groups (such as glee clubs) in Wales since an account of their history has, rather surprisingly, not as yet been written.

Like Erlmann, Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco contributes to the field of men’s music performed in a localised setting with her research on the *cante* tradition of Southern Alentejo, an area located in the southern central area of Portugal.<sup>75</sup> *Cante* is a male choral genre sung unaccompanied in two parts (a parallel third apart), with a soloist (called the *alto*) who has a high voice that must be heard above (yet be able to blend with) the choral backing. In her discussion of the music, Castelo-Branco notes the important role of *cante* within the political arena of Portugal. Following the imposition of a totalitarian regime upon Portugal in 1926 (which lasted until 1974), a cultural policy was formed to construct a sense of national identity based upon Catholicism, ruralism, authority and traditionalism.<sup>76</sup> In this context, two-part singing was chosen both to signify and to promote a sense of regional identity.

Drawing upon older forms of male choral performance in Portugal (the emergence of *orphéon* choirs in the republican era, 1910–1926), the *cante* tradition was performed by males (although female equivalents have emerged in recent decades).<sup>77</sup> Significantly, however, the two represented opposing developments since *Orphéon* groups were an urban phenomenon occurring predominantly in the northern areas of Portugal, while *cante* was introduced to represent local identity in the south. In terms of musical performance and the government’s political agenda, Castelo-Branco highlights the significance of a sartorial change for the singers from the ‘Sunday

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<sup>75</sup> Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco has compiled a major study of vocal music in Portugal entitled *Voix du Portugal* (Paris: Cité de la Musique, 1997). Since I am unable to read French (or the later translation in Spanish (2001)), I am unable to critique this important study. Similarly, I am unable to utilise her later collection (edited with the anthropologist Jorge Frietas Branco). Entitled *Voices de Povo: A Folclorização em Portugal* (Oeiras, Portugal: Celta Editora, 2003), the volume is extensive (containing 43 essays from 38 specialists) and concerns different manifestations of folklorism in Portuguese traditional music.

<sup>76</sup> Castelo-Branco, ‘The Politics and Aesthetics of Two-Part Singing in Southern Alentejo’, in Ardian Ahmedaja and Gerlinde Haid (eds), *European Voices I: Singing in the Balkans and the Mediterranean*, (Boehlau Verlag, 2008), p.20.

<sup>77</sup> *Orphéon* choirs emerged first in 1833 in Paris. For more information on the *orphéon* tradition in France, see Clair Rowden, ‘Choral Music and Music-Making in France’ in Donna M. Di Grazia (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.205–212. Additionally, Chapter 3 will provide an overview of the main developments, especially as they relate to choral singing in Wales.

suit' (informed by a bourgeois conception) to an invented or devised 'harvester's costume', which served to reinforce authenticity through visual representation.<sup>78</sup> As I show in Chapter 5, the notion of concert dress is particularly pertinent for female choral singers in Wales.

While the studies of Erlmann and Castelo-Branco focus on particular male traditions, academic studies on choral singing in general have increased considerably in recent years. In addition to the individual studies mentioned, a varied approach to the study of choral music is featured in Karen Ahlquist's book on *Chorus and Community* (2006), which features contributions from scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds (namely ethnomusicology, musicology and sociology) who have an interest in 'chorus' and 'community'. In particular, the book presents studies of choral singing that range from ethnographic accounts of contemporary gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) choruses in America (written by Jill Strachan), to the reception of the Fisk Jubilee Singers (a famed group of 'musically accomplished, university-educated Americans of African descent') in Holland in 1877 (written by Helen Metzelaar) and a consideration by Kenneth C. Wolensky of union formation in the International Ladies Garment Workers Chorus, a choir that was active in north-eastern Pennsylvania in the post-WWII period.<sup>79</sup> Although Ahlquist's collection features a chapter written by Charles Edward McGuire on music and morality in nineteenth-century England (with particular reference to John Curwen and tonic sol-fa), a discussion of the rich choral tradition of Wales is entirely absent.

A similar omission is observed in *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music* (2013), edited by Donna Di Grazia. Although an important contribution to the study of nineteenth-century choral singing in general, the focus placed upon professional musicians and established composers of Western art music canon does not allow for much discussion of amateur developments in countries such as Wales (the book is structured largely in terms of geographical domains). For example, James Garrett's chapter on Britain and Ireland tends to evade the issues in which I am interested here.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p.22.

<sup>79</sup> Helen Metzelaar, 'Spiritual Singing Brings in the Money: The Fisk Jubilee Singers' Tour Holland in 1877', in Karen Ahlquist (ed.), *Chorus and Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), p.165.

Celia Applegate's introductory chapter on building community through choral singing echoes a number of ethnomusicological concerns such as viewing this form of music making as a 'cultural phenomenon'. Here, Applegate recognises the wider reach of the musical genre by noting that it 'mobili[s]ed tremendous numbers of people in formal and informal musical activities, in public, semi-public, and private music-making, in single-sex and same-sex singing, [and] in sacred, communal and national musical gatherings'.<sup>80</sup>

There is a connection here with the Castelo-Branco study. While principally concerned with the issues of politics and aesthetics as they relate to the *cante* tradition, she notes also the importance of commonality amongst the performers. In particular, she argues that 'comradeship, friendship, and agreement on political issues are necessary conditions for collective singing'.<sup>81</sup> The most recent contribution to the scholarship on community formation and choral singing is Caroline Bithell's book entitled *A Different Voice, A Different Song: Reclaiming Community through the Natural Voice and World Song* (2014). Bringing together two contemporary developments, namely the natural voice movement (a UK-wide development practiced through open-access community choirs) and a 'growing transnational community of amateur singers participating in multicultural music activity', Bithell seeks to uncover why repertoire drawn from non-Western and folk traditions is often performed *en masse* by amateur singers of these choirs.<sup>82</sup> Noting a difference between the type of choirs Finnegan encountered in *The Hidden Musicians* (who were viewed as belonging to the "classical" world), she importantly highlights that singers forming part of the natural voice movement are not musically literate, yet are able to create (and perform within) a vibrant musical community.

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<sup>80</sup> Celia Applegate, 'The Building of Community through Choral Singing', in Donna Di Grazia (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Choral Singing* (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), p.4.

<sup>81</sup> Castelo-Branco, p.32.

<sup>82</sup> Caroline Bithell, *A Different Voice, A Different Song: Reclaiming Community through the Natural Voice and World Song* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), p.1.

### On Historical Approaches

Such studies by Finnegan and Bithell follow an established precedent in ethnomusicology concerning research methodology. Many definitions of ethnomusicology state that it is a discipline concerned primarily with ethnographic techniques and a desire to understand how the life of a living musician or lives of a group of musicians are shaped through music; it is often typified by doing work ‘in the field’. Yet some ethnomusicologists have eschewed ethnographic interpretations of the present, seeking instead to understand and explain how a culture’s music has developed over time; a precedent for such diachronic studies was set by comparative musicologists. Here, the issues of continuity and change are especially noteworthy. As Richard Widdess states: ‘each music, as each society, is the temporary result of continuing historical processes, processes that may or may not be important to the performer, but are arguably important to the outside observer’.<sup>83</sup> Bruno Nettl observed that a significant development had emerged in scholarly thought by the end of the twentieth century; continuity and change were no longer viewed as separate entities, but rather it was realised that ‘change is really continuous’.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the concept of history is crucial here. Since fieldwork presents the ethnomusicologist with a glimmer of the musical past through the present (by examining the facets of a continued tradition or the issue of memory), it is possible to look at the narratives of the musical past to understand the musical traditions of the present. This is historical ethnomusicology.

Although Widdess’ 1992 commentary on historical ethnomusicology is often marked as an important turning point in the discipline (see, for example, McCollum and Hebert, 2014), other scholars were addressing such issues more than a decade earlier. In 1980, Kay Shelemay acknowledged the connection between musical and cultural systems in ethnomusicology, yet criticised the discipline for ‘not employ[ing] the insights gained through studies of living music

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<sup>83</sup> Richard Widdess, ‘Historical Ethnomusicology’, in Helen Myers (ed.), *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p.219.

<sup>84</sup> Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), p.272.



cultures to better understand their pasts’.<sup>85</sup> For Shelemay, the lack of historical approaches in ethnomusicology is attributed to the lasting perception that musicology is defined as a ‘historical pursuit’, while ethnomusicology uses the present as its domain.<sup>86</sup> Here, the two disciplines are viewed as mutually exclusive. Using a case study to illustrate her view that ethnomusicologists can (and should) contribute more to understandings about history, Shelemay notes how her fieldwork on the Falasha of Ethiopia prompted her approach: ‘accepted notions of Falasha history did not adequately account for the musical-liturgical tradition I was observing. The central questions [...] were not satisfactorily answered by existing theories. However, the data I gathered from the Falasha oral tradition provided evidence for a new perspective’.<sup>87</sup> By comparing oral testimonies gathered in the present to historical documents of the past, Shelemay was able to offer explanations for anomalies in Falasha liturgical practice for the first time.

Despite the advancement of historical ethnomusicology by individuals such as Shelemay, a new focus on history in ethnomusicology was also echoed at an institutional level. In 2003, the International Council for Traditional Music established a research group for Historical Sources of Traditional Music. Two years later, a Special Interest Group for Historical Ethnomusicology was established within the international Society for Ethnomusicology with the aim to ‘support historical studies in the field of ethnomusicology’.<sup>88</sup> It is currently chaired by Jonathan McCollum and has approximately 50 members (although it is likely that there are many more interested in historical methods who are not officially part of this group). The issue of historical pasts has not eluded the study of ethnomusicology in the UK. In 2006, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, the journal for the British Forum for Ethnomusicology, published a special issue dealing entirely with the ‘past in music’. In this matter, Bithell, the editor of the special edition, states that the aim of the issue is not to understand what music sounded like in the past but rather ‘to explore the ways in which

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<sup>85</sup> Kay Kaufman Shelemay, “‘Historical Ethnomusicology’: Reconstructing Falasha Liturgical History”, *Ethnomusicology*, 24/2 (1980), p.233.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p.235.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted from the group’s mission statement, SEM website <<http://www.ethnomusicology.org/>> [accessed 10 April 2014].

echoes and legacies from the past can still be heard in the present and to consider the extent to which musical practices in the present are shaped not only by past experience but also by ideas, feelings and beliefs about the past'.<sup>89</sup>

There are other scholars, however, who deal more exclusively with music performed in the past. John Morgan O'Connell's doctoral dissertation explores the relationship between the past and the present with respect to vocal performance in Turkish music.<sup>90</sup> Conducting both historical research (in archives and libraries) and ethnomusicological fieldwork (in lessons and interviews), he looks at the ways in which the past is constructed in the present following an anthropological precedent initiated in the Chicago School of Anthropology. Following Marshall Sahlins,<sup>91</sup> O'Connell examines two studies; the first in Fiji (by Toren)<sup>92</sup> and the second in South Africa (by Comaroff and Comaroff).<sup>93</sup> Here, he shows how different conceptions of the past reveal conflicting notions of the present, a colonial and literate history being viewed as temporal disjuncture, and a pre-colonial and oral history being viewed as temporal continuity. Significantly, he invokes the Comaroffs' reading of 'double consciousness' as it relates to two interpretations

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<sup>89</sup> Caroline Bithell, 'The Past in Music: An Introduction', *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 15/1 (2006), p.4.

<sup>90</sup> John Morgan O'Connell, 'Alaturka Revisited: Style as History in Turkish Vocal Performance' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1996).

<sup>91</sup> Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). Presented as a collection of five lectures (delivered to audiences in New Zealand, the USA and Europe between 1980 and 1983), *Islands of History* is a theoretical treatise concerned with South Seas cultures in Polynesia, in which Sahlins investigates how histories are structured by cultural meanings. While he is principally interested in exploring the significance of oral traditions (in which speech makes history), Sahlins is also interested in the construction of contested histories and mythologies. Moreover, he provides two differing conceptions of history: the first is based upon an elite conception, and the second is based upon the idea of a communal history (one that is, 'constructed from the bottom up', p.517).

<sup>92</sup> Christina Toren, 'Making the Present, Revealing the Past: The Mutability and Continuity of Tradition as Process', *Man*, 23/4 (1988), pp.696–717. Here, Toren examines the significance of Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Last Supper', an image that features in many churches and houses in Fiji. Instead of Fiji being categorised as a nation with a pre-colonial history and a post-colonial existence, Toren argues that the appropriation of specific Christian icons in Fiji represents both the transformation to a post-colonial era and the cultural constitution of a pre-Christian society; it is able to manifest change but also continuity. She explains, 'in the act of constructing the present, people may also be constructing a past with which it is continuous and in whose terms it is explicable' (p. 696).

<sup>93</sup> John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992). Responding to contemporary concerns over the process of writing ethnographies, the Comaroffs present a neomodernist strategy for providing a suitable method in a postmodern context. Significantly, they interpret history as an expression of consciousness performed frequently by individuals. Moreover, they apply this theoretical approach to their study of the Tswana in South Africa. Here, the Comaroffs disclose two distinctly different worldviews relating to history and consciousness: the first is that of the colonisers (whose consciousness is based largely upon written historical documents) and the second is that of the colonised (whose voice is based primarily upon oral accounts in the ethnographic present).

of the Turkish past in musical historiography, where music in the Turkish Republic (founded in 1923) does or does not represent a new beginning.

In his latest monograph, O'Connell (2013) develops his established approach to historical ethnography. Entitled *Alaturka: Style in Turkish Music (1923–1938)*, he looks principally at the life of the Turkish vocalist named Münir Nurettin Selçuk (1899–1981). Using 'style' as a medium for interrogating differing views of music and culture, O'Connell's approach lies on a continuum between history and ethnography, an historical ethnography of a musical style called in Turkish 'alaturka' using archival sources and ethnomusicological methods. O'Connell is keenly aware of his innovative approach. He notes:

Although a historical style of musicology might focus exclusively upon written sources, a historical style of ethnomusicology might concentrate upon oral narratives. In this matter, scholars of music rarely transcend the divide between history and ethnography by examining both historical documents and ethnographic narratives. As a style of 'historical ethnomusicology', [...] this study of style in Turkish music embraces both the oral and the literate to realise an alternative interpretation of the past in the present.<sup>94</sup>

Significantly, O'Connell's work draws upon the personal archive of the Turkish vocalist (held at first in a cupboard in the artist's apartment and later catalogued by O'Connell). His ethnographic work, on the other hand, is demonstrated not only through interviews held with members of Selçuk's family but also through a reconstruction of past musical events in the present, utilising sources such as concert reviews and musical programmes. It is noteworthy that O'Connell focuses here upon an individual. As Rice and Ruskin noted in 2012, 'the individual musician occupies a seemingly paradoxical position in ethnomusicology'.<sup>95</sup> To explain, they highlight the fact that the word ethnomusicology is derived from the Greek word for nation (*ethnos*), which suggests that as a discipline its practitioners are interested in the study of musical groups rather than individuals. They also note, however, that individuals come to feature in ethnomusicology since individual musicians encountered in the field are usually the 'most exceptional individuals

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<sup>94</sup> O'Connell, *Alaturka: Style in Turkish Music (1923–1938)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), pp.xv–xvi.

<sup>95</sup> Jesse D. Ruskin and Timothy Rice, 'The Individual in Musical Ethnography', *Ethnomusicology*, 56/2 (2012), p.299.

in a given musical community' and ethnomusicology 'values the exceptional and valori[s]es individual achievement'.<sup>96</sup> In their study of book-length ethnographies published in the last 35 years, Rice and Ruskin notice that two thirds of the books contain face-to-face encounters with the individual musicians in question through the traditional ethnomusicological method of fieldwork. The remaining third reflects an 'increasing concern with the writing of musical histories in ethnomusicology' in which printed, recorded and archival sources are utilised to study the individual.<sup>97</sup> O'Connell's study reflects this latter position.

According to Widdess, 'there is no consensus on the agenda or methodology of historical ethnomusicology, and a wide variety of historical materials and approaches to their study can be observed'.<sup>98</sup> However, since the time of Widdess' publication attempts have been made to provide a framework for studying the musical past in ethnomusicology. In 2014, Jonathan McCollum and David Hebert published an edited collection entitled *Theory and Method in Historical Ethnomusicology* in which they demonstrate the various ways in which new approaches to historiography (and new technologies in scholarly endeavours) influence ethnomusicologists who wish to examine and represent musical traditions that are removed from the present in terms of space and time.<sup>99</sup>

In their chapter on 'Methodologies for Historical Ethnomusicology in the Twenty-First Century', McCollum and Hebert address two fundamental matters: first, how primary sources founded upon oral testimony or ethnographic research can confirm or contest representations of the musical past; and second, how the data collected in the form of written and recorded sources can contribute to the meaningful study of music history when used in an analytical manner. In the same volume, Chris Goertzen uses such sources to uncover the composite repertoire of fiddling in the southern United States. In particular, he examines three temporal snapshots, namely late eighteenth-century Scotland, early nineteenth-century England and mid-nineteenth-

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.318.

<sup>98</sup> Widdess, p.219.

<sup>99</sup> Jonathan McCollum and David Hebert (eds), *Theory and Method in Historical Ethnomusicology* (London: Lexington Books, 2014).

century America. Although predominantly an oral tradition, Goertzen looks at printed materials (such as personal correspondence, travel writing and musical notation) in relation to factors such as fashion, technology and movement amongst others to show how the fiddle repertoire was shaped by multiple influences at different moments in history.

While Goertzen provides one example for how historical ethnomusicology can be carried out in the twenty-first century, McCollum and Hebert are concerned with questions regarding the contested field of history in ethnomusicology, as well as even broader questions challenging the discipline of ethnomusicology itself. Here, McCollum and Hebert state that the purpose of the publication is not an attempt to define a specialist subgroup but rather echo what Widdess and Shelemay put forward earlier – that historical ethnomusicology offers a bridge between the accepted but artificial boundary between musicology and ethnomusicology. Once again, the distinction between the musicology and ethnomusicology is called upon to define historical ethnomusicology; what it is or what it can do.<sup>100</sup> That said, a widely accepted definition of historical ethnomusicology does not seem to exist.

For the purpose of this thesis, however, my understanding of historical ethnomusicology is drawn from Shelemay's early writing on the subject; as an approach combining history and ethnography, historical ethnomusicology allows me to uncover 'the potential that a synchronic study has for illuminating the historical continuum from which it emerged'.<sup>101</sup> Like Shelemay, my transition from ethnomusicology to historical ethnomusicology was triggered through my fieldwork experience. While conducting interviews with male choristers for a study on performed

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<sup>100</sup> The potential for disciplinary exchange between musicology and ethnomusicology has been discussed in other scholarly arguments of the twenty-first century, most notably in Henry Stobart's edited collection on 'new (ethno)musicologies'. See Henry Stobart (ed.), *The New (Ethno)musicologies* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2008). Here, in the opinion of Jim Samson (a musicologist), the two disciplines are disparate but each could benefit from borrowing 'tools' from the other. For example, ethnomusicologists could place more emphasis upon analytical techniques, while musicologists could seek to uncover more sources relating to oral practices. However for Nicholas Cook (also a musicologist), it is increasingly difficult to mark the distinctions between musicology and ethnomusicology as the boundaries between the two have become somewhat blurred. In particular, he notes how musicologists have adopted ethnographic methods, acknowledged that multiple histories of music are possible and placed a greater focus upon socio-interactionist readings of musical meaning. For Cook, such developments mark a step towards a 'total field' of musical scholarship, or the 'ethnomusicologization of musicology' (p.65). He states 'we are all ethnomusicologists now' (ibid.).

<sup>101</sup> Shelemay, p.233.

masculinities in Welsh music (MA dissertation, Cardiff University, 2009–2010), I realised that little was known about female choirs in Wales. I noticed a disjunction between ethnographic description in interviews and literary representations in published sources. The central questions about how gender affected the development of the tradition from the nineteenth century were not adequately answered, and I realised that I would need to alter my methodology to provide a new perspective on this facet of Welsh history.

### **Engendering a Nation through Music<sup>102</sup>**

In this chapter, I have shown how the issues of music, gender and nationhood are pertinent to a contemporary discussion of choral singing in Wales. In particular, I trace how the nation has been (and continues to be) represented at national and international events. Significantly, the Welsh often present a singular reading of Welsh masculinity at such events. As a gendered interrogation of choral music in Wales, this thesis addresses a significant issue in ethnomusicology; studies of Welsh music are almost entirely absent from the field. Filling important lacunae not only in the discipline of ethnomusicology but also in the realm of Welsh studies, I trace the ways in which gender has informed the development of the choral tradition in Wales since the late nineteenth century. Here, I draw especially upon Sugarman's concept of 'engendering song' (where singing invokes meaning) and Koskoff's notion of a 'feminist ethnomusicology' (where hegemonic practices are critiqued).

My study of choral singing, in many respects, replicates the theoretical approaches of scholars such as Sugarman and Averill, who are concerned primarily with the social aspects of participation and the creation of community through vocal performance. While Sugarman deals with ethnographic accounts in the present of Prespa Albanians, Averill is concerned with

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<sup>102</sup> Philip Bohlman has written extensively on the relationship between music and nation building, especially with reference to European musics. In particular, he argues that 'the use of music to shape an image of the nation is conscious [... We] find that those who turn to music to shape that image do so because they recognise the power of music to enhance the power of the nation'. See Philip V. Bohlman, *Focus: Music, Nationalism, and the Making of the New Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (New York; London: Routledge, 2011), p.58.

ethnographic accounts of the past with reference to the barbershop quartet. My interpretation of choral singing in Wales is influenced by both approaches. As a theory of practice, my approach is developed not only from theoretical models in ethnomusicology but also from my own position as a scholar (in terms of my academic background) and as an individual (a Welsh woman). As a history, my diachronic representation of choral singing is a critical account that calls into question the exclusion of women in extant accounts concerning Welsh choirs. This exclusion is still found in relevant sources today. Here, my representation of history is constructed through historical analysis and ethnographic research, a historical ethnography that enables me to provide an interpretative understanding of how the concepts of gender and identity have been shaped in choral performance since the late Victorian era.

The relationship between the past and the present is crucial here. Invoking the Comaroffs' concept of 'double consciousness', I examine, on the one hand, the construction of gendered performance in choral practice by providing a historical approach to choral music in Wales. On the other hand, I deconstruct an established construction of gender identity in Welsh choirs by examining the representation of female choirs to demonstrate the subordination of women both in Welsh music and Welsh culture. While my approach mirrors in some ways the theoretical precedent set by O'Connell, it differs in other ways especially in terms of the data collected. Although O'Connell's monograph is centred upon a historical representation of a Turkish vocalist (Selçuk d.1981) using archival sources, he also includes ethnographic research, including a number of interviews in the ethnographic present with members and associates of Selçuk; most significantly with his daughter and his son.

However, I have not adopted such an approach in this thesis for a number of reasons. First, I have not been able to locate and to interview the descendants of choristers since membership lists for specific choirs are not always available. Second, I was unable to contact surviving choristers (when mentioned in membership lists), since they (in contrast to O'Connell) were no longer alive, the period under discussion being more than a century from my

ethnographic present. Third, I have not recorded here nostalgic accounts today of choral singing in Wales from the relevant period, since the representation of such accounts is beyond the scope and the nature of this project. Instead, I utilise a methodology advanced by McCollum and Hebert in which written sources and ethnographic accounts are collated and analysed to show how music can confirm or contest an established reading of gender and nationhood. By drawing upon these sources, I show that women were active participants in Welsh choirs even though women have been largely excluded from the received history of choral singing in Wales.

To summarise, I have endeavoured to locate my study of Welsh music and Welsh history within the scholarly domains of ethnomusicology and anthropology. Recognising the complementary aspects of gender and (national) identity, I will examine choral singing by reflecting upon the construction of gender in the context of history and I will represent identity as a contemporary embodiment of Welsh history. In this chapter, I argued that musical practices in Wales have been historically linked to a masculine identity that is demonstrated not only through song texts (such as the ‘March of the Men of Harlech’) but also through literary representations (such as Llewellyn’s popular novel *How Green Was My Valley*). By providing an overview of the suffrage movement in Wales, I showed how female involvement in this political campaign especially challenged (albeit not directly) the absence or marginalisation of women in such representations. Since my investigation into gender and identity will focus on singing in this thesis, I present in the next chapter an overview of important religious developments (from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth) that shaped the ways in which the earliest examples of congregational singing were developed in Wales.



## Chapter Two

### The Chapel: Sacred Music, Nonconformity, Tonic Sol-fa

As a nation, the people of Wales have been singing collectively for many centuries. Giraldus Cambrensis (known also as ‘Gerald of Wales’) is often quoted to validate this statement since he noted, in the twelfth century, that the people of Wales sang in many parts unlike other British nations at that time.<sup>1</sup> However, the notion of congregational singing is a much later development, occurring after the Protestant Reformation and more recently finding expression with the awakening of the nation through the Methodist Revival.<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, I examine the history of congregational singing in Wales (from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century) with reference to the emergence and development of sacred musical styles performed within the chapel, a context that not only provided a space for singing together but also a space for social interaction. Here, a discussion of congregational music provides the historical backdrop for discussing communal music in the proceeding chapters.<sup>3</sup> While the developments detailed here pre-date the chosen time frame for this thesis (namely 1872–1918), knowledge of significant religious movements is crucial to understanding how music (especially choral music) and its relationship to a native identity (especially in terms of language) became so prevalent in late nineteenth-century Wales.

The chapter is divided into three main sections, each providing an overview of a significant religious development in England and in Wales. First, I consider the use of language

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<sup>1</sup> In his *Description of Wales* (written in 1194), Giraldus remarks, ‘They do not sing in unison like other nations, but in many voices and in many rhythms and intervals. In a company of singers, as is usual with this nation, there are as many tunes and varieties of voice as there are heads, all uniting finally in harmonious concord with the smooth sweetness of B flat, in one integrated melody’. Quote reproduced from *Descriptio Cambriae* (ed. by Dimock, 1868) in Phyllis Kinney, ‘Wales: Traditional Music’, *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>> [accessed 20 October 2013].

<sup>2</sup> E. Wyn James, Professor of Welsh and hymnology, notes that hymns in Welsh were almost non-existent until the eighteenth century; a fact that highlights the scale of the growth of the hymn as both a religious and a musical form throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. E. Wyn James, ‘The Evolution of the Welsh Hymn’, in Isabel Rivers and David L. Wykes (eds), *Dissenting Praise: Religious Dissent and the Hymn in England and Wales* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), p.229.

<sup>3</sup> As noted earlier, the distinction between congregational music and communal music is made here based upon performance context, sacred for the former and secular for the latter.

in worship at the time of the Protestant Reformation. Language, in particular, is a contentious issue with respect to promoting a native form of identity. To explore the issue, I discuss the introduction of literate sources in English (such as the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible), as well as later versions in Welsh including early examples of music to be used in worship. Second, I chart the Methodist Revival that occurred in eighteenth-century Wales. The rise of nonconformist supporters is especially noteworthy since the 1851 census revealed that Wales had become a predominantly nonconformist nation; importantly, Welsh was the language of nonconformity. The final section of the chapter examines the religious revival of 1859 in Wales. Occurring concurrently with rapid industrial expansion, the revival provided an opportunity through which industrial workers could consolidate facets of Welsh identity such as religion (nonconformity), language (Welsh) and music (hymn/tune books).

### **Religion and the Welsh: the Protestant Reformation**

The relationship between religion and the Welsh was turbulent, especially during the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries when a series of reformations and revivals took place. One of the most significant changes at this time involved King Henry VIII (1491–1597) and the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation resulted after a lengthy dispute that began in 1526 between the King Henry and the Pope, who refused to grant an annulment for the marriage of King Henry and Catherine of Aragon (married 1509), in order for the King to marry Anne Boleyn (c.1501–1536). Despite Henry claiming that the marriage was unlawful since Catherine was the widow of his brother Arthur, the Pope refused to grant the annulment; it has been speculated that the reason for this was that he did not wish to offend Catherine's nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V (1500–1558). In January 1533, without officially ending his marriage to Catherine, Henry secretly married Anne Boleyn who was expecting their first child in the autumn of that year. With the Pope's continued refusal to grant the annulment, Henry took

matters into his own hands with the aid of the Archdeacon of Canterbury, Thomas Cromwell (1489–1556), who annulled the marriage between Henry and Catherine in May 1533. As a result, both Henry and Cromwell were excommunicated from the Church in Rome which severed ties between the British monarchy and papal authority.

One of the consequences of the excommunication was that the monasteries in England and Wales were dissolved, an action that simultaneously made Henry the Supreme Head of his own establishment, the Church of England. The imposition of a Protestant faith on the people of Wales was received, at that time, without opposition. While Tudor policies were often accepted in London and the surrounding areas, they were frequently opposed in the peripheries such as Scotland, Northern England and Ireland. Wales was an exception. In some ways, this could be expected since there was a link between the Tudors and the Welsh. Henry Tudor or King Henry VII (1457–1509), father of Henry VIII, had Welsh roots since he was born in Pembroke Castle and descended from the family of Penmynydd on Anglesey; ‘he was considered a Welshman and was himself conscious of this heritage’.<sup>4</sup> In 1485, his victory over Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth signalled his accession to the throne, was also seemingly claimed as a triumph for the Welsh vassals in general. George Owen, a Pembrokeshire squire and historian, reported that ‘Henry VII charged his son [...] to have a special care for his own nation and kinsmen, the Welsh’.<sup>5</sup>

While Henry VIII did not always agree with his father, the Acts of Union, which took place between 1536 and 1543, ensured that Wales became both recognised as a distinct cultural entity and also incorporated fully into the political decisions made by the governing powers in England. However, this did not work wholly in favour of the Welsh. Despite the acknowledgement of a distinction between England and Wales in terms of language (amongst

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<sup>4</sup> P. R. Roberts, ‘The Union with England and the Identity of “Anglican” Wales’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 22 (1972), p.49.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50.

other cultural forms), the people of Wales were affected significantly by the 1536 Act of Union which stated that the official language for law and administration in Wales was to be English. Of the 7,500 words comprising the 1536 Act, a mere two per cent of the text referred to the transition from English to Welsh, yet the repercussions of the new legislation were highly significant. Although the native language was not prohibited in daily life, the message of the 1536 ruling was clear: in order to succeed in the realms of government and economy, proficiency in the English language was paramount. This was a perception held especially by members of the gentry who slowly ceased to speak Welsh between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> By creating a Welsh ruling class that was fluent in English, the Welsh language was consequently confined to the lower middle and working classes. Accordingly, a relationship was formed between linguistic choice and social class.

The process of Anglicisation was not unique in this context. In 1549, King Edward VI (1537–1553) passed a law (the first Act of Uniformity) that stated that all acts of worship were to be conducted in English in place of Latin. The introduction of the new English liturgy required new liturgical publications (such as the Book of Common Prayer) to be published in English, which was problematic for those regions of England and Wales where English was not the predominant language. In Cornwall, violent riots took place as part of the Anglo-Cornish War which took place in June and August 1549, a rebellion that was organised against the adoption of the new prayer books. The change of language was also a concern in Wales since the vast majority of the population was Welsh speaking. Sally Harper, a musicologist, argues that the transition to English ‘must have been more alien [to the Welsh] than the Latin it replaced’.<sup>7</sup> Faced with the forceful imposition of the English language in the contexts of both sacred and governmental practices, it can be argued that the people of Wales could do little to protect the use and promotion of their native language. A number of Welsh Protestant reformers, however,

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<sup>6</sup> Wyn James, p.230.

<sup>7</sup> Sally Harper, *Music in Welsh Culture Before 1650: A Study of the Principal Sources* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.337.

did just that by forming a campaign for the translation and publication of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer in Welsh.

William Salesbury (1520–1584) was one such reformer.<sup>8</sup> Salesbury was a scholar with a desire to make the Holy Scriptures available to the Welsh in their native language. In 1551, he published a Welsh translation of the epistles and gospels, although it was not officially authorised by the church. His plight to make his translation officially recognised was stalled further by the ascension to the throne of Queen Mary I (1516–1558) in 1553 and her restoration of the Roman Catholic faith. That being said, the desire to create a Welsh prayer book did not wane, and in 1563, an Act of Parliament under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603) commanded that both the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible were to be translated into Welsh. However, this was not an instant process since the translation of the two books was not completed until 25 years after the Act was passed; the translation of the Book of Common Prayer (together with the New Testament) appeared first in 1567, but the full translation of the Bible did not appear until 1588.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the publication of such materials, the 1563 Act ensured that they could be used in places of worship, stating that sacred services should be conducted through the medium of Welsh in the geographical areas ‘where the Welsh Tongue is commonly used’.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Welsh became accepted as one of the official languages for worship.

But how did this affect music within the sacred context? Unlike the introduction of hymn singing to Germany by Martin Luther, the notion of congregational singing in Wales did not gain impetus until the nonconformist revivals of the eighteenth century. However, there are earlier examples of music within the religious setting. For example, some Welsh parishes (notably Cardiff, Swansea, Brecon and Montgomery) subsidised a small choir and an organist in the early

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<sup>8</sup> The dates for Salesbury are unclear. The dates used here are taken from Welsh Biography Online <<http://wbo.llgc.org.uk>> [accessed 8 October 2014].

<sup>9</sup> While an official prayer book existed in England, it seems that the country’s governing powers were not wholly satisfied with the version. In 1604, one year after becoming the King of England, James I (1566–1625) commanded a new English translation of the Latin original, which was printed by the King’s printer, Robert Barker, in 1611. It is known as the King James Bible or the authorised version (AV).

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Wyn James, p.232.

sixteenth century. However, Harper notes that there is no evidence to suggest that the music produced was a collaborative effort between the congregation and such musicians.<sup>11</sup> A move towards congregational singing came with the introduction of metrical psalms into places of worship. In 1562, *The Whole Booke of Psalms Collected into English Meeter* was published in London by John Day (c.1522–1584). The collection, although a collaborative work, principally featured the work of Thomas Sternhold (1500–1549) and John Hopkins (n.d.), whose verses tended to be written in common metre (86.86).<sup>12</sup> The title page of this first edition is of interest. In addition to providing metrical psalms to be sung ‘[by] all the people together’, it states that its purpose is to ‘[lay] apart all ungodly Songs and Ballads, which tend onely [*sic*] to the nourishment of vice, and corrupting of youth’.<sup>13</sup> The inclusion of such a statement served two purposes: first, it highlighted that a certain type of music had to be utilised within sacred contexts; and second, by stressing this fact, the publication is justified to the new practitioners as a collection of ‘appropriate’ religious music.

This collection of metrical psalms evoked mixed responses in Wales. On the one hand, it allowed congregations to participate collectively in services. On the other, however, it was not produced in the native tongue. Once again, language was a contentious issue. It was for this reason that wordsmiths in Wales began experimenting in order to create their own metrical psalms in the Welsh language during the 1570s. It seems that these early attempts were not entirely successful since Morris Kyffin (c.1555–1598), a Welsh writer and soldier, called for Welsh metrical psalms to be written in 1584; his request was published in the preface to his translation of John Jewel’s *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (*The Apology of the Church of England*, published in 1562), entitled *Deffynniad Ffydd Eghwys Loegr*. Moreover, it is clear that the notion of being able to sing together was a significant factor since Kyffin highlights the importance of

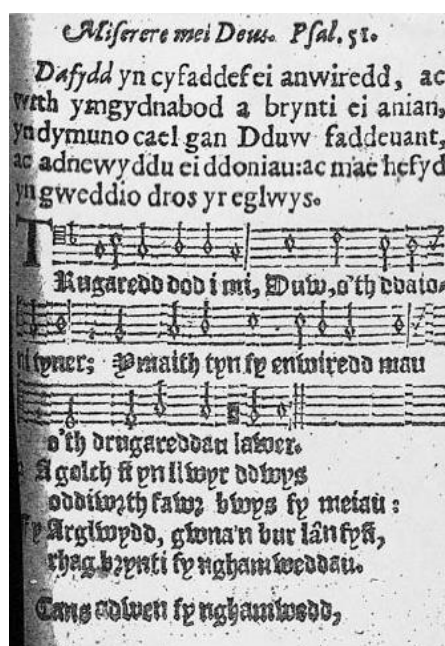
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<sup>11</sup> Sally Harper, ‘So that the people can sing together in church’: Aspects of the parish soundscape in Wales c.1500–c.1630’, paper presented at ‘The Welsh Medieval Church and its Context’ conference, St Fagans National History Museum, 15 November 2008. Conference proceedings published online: <<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/2082/>> [accessed 15 September 2014].

<sup>12</sup> Common metre is made up of alternating lines of eight and six syllables.

<sup>13</sup> Harper (2008), p.11.

choosing a metre that would not only be ‘acceptable in every country’ but one that would also allow ‘people [to] sing together in unison at the same time in church’.<sup>14</sup>



**Plate 2.1:** A metrical psalm from Prys’ *Llyfr y Psalman* (1621)<sup>15</sup>

Kyffin’s plea was achieved fully with the publication of a metrical psalter by Edmwnd Prys (1543–1623), Archdeacon of Merioneth, in 1621. The publication, entitled *Llyfr y Psalman* (*The Book of Psalms*) was not only the first collection of metrical psalms in the Welsh language, but also the first Welsh language book to contain music (see Plate 2.1).<sup>16</sup> Incidentally, it should be noted that the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter did not contain any musical tunes, although later editions were amended to do so. In terms of text, Prys’ psalter contained 150 psalm verses with all but four composed in a metre that was designed to be simple enough to allow groups to sing

<sup>14</sup> Original Welsh text: ‘Gwaith rhediol iawn fyddde troi’r Psalmen i gynghanedd Gymraeg [...] i’r fath fessur a thôn canghanedd ag sydd gymeradwry ymbôb gwlad [...] ag fal y gwelir yn y Saesonaeg, Scotiaith, Frangaeg, iaith Germania, iaith Itali, a’r cyfryw: fal y gallo’r bobl ganu y gyd a’r unwaith yn yr Eglwys’.

English translation: ‘It would be very essential work to translate the Psalms into Welsh verse [...] into the type of metre and versified tune which is acceptable in every country [...] as is seen in English, Scots, French, German, Italian and the like ... so that the people can sing together in unison at the same time in church [...]’. Both versions appear in Harper (2008), p.8.

<sup>15</sup> Image reproduced from Harper, ‘Tunes for a Welsh Psalter: Edmwnd Prys’s *Llyfr y Psalman*’, *Studia Celtica*, 37 (2003), p.229.

<sup>16</sup> Harper (2003), p.221.

together; this metre is now known as *mesur salm* or psalm metre (87.87.).<sup>17</sup> In addition to the syllabic structure associated with its four-line stanzas, the metre also contains a fixed number of stresses per line – four in lines 1 and 3, and three in lines 2 and 4. Musically, the verses were set to a number of tunes, although it is perhaps surprising that Prys only included 12 tunes to be used for all 150 psalm texts. However, the origin for such tunes was seemingly not Welsh. As the notion of psalm singing was well-established outside of Wales prior to the publication of Prys’ psalter, the majority of the tunes had been widely utilised as psalm melodies in both England and Scotland; the tunes in common metre (a prominent form in England especially) could be easily matched with the Welsh psalm metre.

Despite the advancements made in Wales by the publication of Prys’ collection, the result was said to be less than favourable with the psalms being described as both ‘stiff and difficult to sing’.<sup>18</sup> That being said, vocal performance in a sacred setting did not diminish; parishes were increasingly concerned with developing music making within religious contexts. For example, in 1752, the register of the Ystradfydwg parish (based in Glamorgan) noted that a singing master (name unknown) was paid one pound.<sup>19</sup> This was not an isolated case. In the late eighteenth century, the singing of Henry Mills (1757–1820) from Llanidloes caught the attention of Thomas Charles (1755–1814) of Bala while he was visiting Bethel, North Wales. Charles, a patriarch of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism, was impressed enough to enquire whether Mills could become an official teacher of singing for the area of Llanidloes. Despite reservations ‘born no doubt of prejudice against music and particularly instrumental music’, Mills was appointed as the first formal peripatetic teacher of congregational singing in Wales.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Psalm metre is comprised of alternating lines of eight and seven syllables.

<sup>18</sup> Rhidian Griffiths, ‘Welsh Chapel Music’, *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History*, 6 (1989), p.36.

<sup>19</sup> John Haydn Davies, ‘Rhondda Choral Music in Victorian Times’, in K. S. Hopkins (ed.), *Rhondda Past and Future* (Rhondda: Rhondda Borough Council, [1975]), p.129.

<sup>20</sup> Rhidian Griffiths, ‘Songs of Praises’, in John Gwynfor Jones (ed.), *The History of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism, III: Growth and Consolidation (c.1814–1914)* ([s.l.]: the Historical Society, 2013), p.139.



Although parishes apparently found the financial means to teach singing in the mid- to late eighteenth century, books explaining the rudiments of music were not produced until the turn of the nineteenth century. The first musical grammar published in the Welsh language was a small pocketbook entitled *Cyfaillmewn Llogell* (*A Friend in the Pocket*), produced by John Williams (known also as ‘Siôn Singer’, c.1750–1807), a peripatetic music teacher and Baptist minister, in 1797. According to Williams, the main purpose of the book was to improve congregational singing.<sup>21</sup> In addition to an explanation of the musical scale or ‘gamut’, the book contained a number of music lessons, enabling its readers to become familiar with the fundamental principles of musical grammar. This publication marked an important step in the Welsh musical tradition for two reasons: first, it signalled a move from an oral to a literate mode of transmission; and second, it showed that, although a lexicon for musical terms in Welsh was absent prior to 1797, the desire to create such a lexicon was apparent. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Williams’ pocketbook prompted the publication of a number of similar guides, such as John Ellis’ *Mawl yr Arghwydd* (*Praise the Lord*, published in 1816) and John Ryland Harris’ *Grisiau Cerdd Arwest* (*Steps in Music*, published in 1823).

Moses Davies (1799–1866), a musician based in Merthyr Tydfil, commented upon the publication of such handbooks: ‘the few singing masters (as they were called) whom I happened to be acquainted with seemed to make a great secret of [music], so that they might be able to make more money by making it a mystery’.<sup>22</sup> However, Davies took a different approach. As part of his role as precentor at the church of Pontmorlais, he eschewed the method of oral learning which had been prevalent in earlier times, and replaced it with a method that attempted to teach the congregation the principles of music alongside new hymn tunes by using large printed cards. It was noted that ‘by doing so [the congregation] found it easier to learn the new tune’.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Phyllis Kinney, *Welsh Traditional Music* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p.173.

<sup>22</sup> David Morgans, *Music and Musicians of Merthyr and District* (Merthyr Tydfil: H. W. Southey & Sons, 1922), p.21.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

That being said, Davies' congregation did not always follow his instruction. After a seven-year hiatus (1821–1827) from his musical role (in order to improve his trade as a plasterer in various English cities), he returned to Merthyr with renewed vigour for the development of the choir, which included the introduction of a number of rules for each member. For example, each chorister was expected to pay three pence a month to cover the rehearsal expenses of light, coal and music materials. Moreover, Davies had musical ideas. He noticed that while the tenors had learnt the habit of singing the tune (with the sopranos singing the 'tenor' line an octave above), this was not the general custom utilised elsewhere. He attempted to alter this practice by instructing the sopranos to sing the melody above the tenor line, a suggestion that was met with particular disdain both among the congregation and by a second, older precentor at Pontmorlais. Davies sought backing from an elder deacon, who unfortunately responded: 'my dear boy, [...] I feel that your way of singing is too fine for the old Welsh people; it might do for the English'.<sup>24</sup> As a consequence of the lack of support for Davies and his 'new' method of choral harmony, Davies resigned from his role as precentor and the choir disbanded. In this manner, collective perceptions about musical aesthetics took precedence over musical participation.

### **Welsh Jumpers: The Methodist Revival and Nonconformity**

While the Protestant Reformation was widely contested in England and Scotland, the situation was seemingly different in Wales as many remained faithful to the Roman Catholic Church. Outside of Wales, however, a development occurring in the nineteenth century allowed some compromise between the Catholic Church and the Church of England. The Oxford Movement (headed from within the University of Oxford) concerned a renewal of Catholic practices within the Church of England. Although the movement was supported marginally in Wales, it did not gain the same momentum as it did in England since the Church of England retained only a

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

subordinate status in Wales. Much more important was the emergence of the Methodist movement in Wales, a movement spearheaded by dissenters (known as the Old Dissenters) who began to emerge in the early eighteenth century. In 1715, supporters linked to dissenting causes were estimated to number about 25,000 (6 per cent of the Welsh population of approximately 400,000), with the majority residing in South Wales.<sup>25</sup>

As a way of strengthening and revitalising Christianity in Wales, a Methodist Revival began in the 1730s as an evangelical movement that was promoted from within the Established Church. The main exponents of Methodism in Wales were Howel Harris (1714–1773) and Daniel Rowland (1713–1790). In 1735, the preaching of the vicar Pryce Davies at a parish church in Talgarth impressed Harris, a young schoolmaster, so much that he began to exhort the devotional principles of Christianity upon his local community. He is described as ‘a fiery preacher [...] an impulsive, passionate [and] authoritarian character’.<sup>26</sup> In a similar fashion and occurring simultaneously, Rowland was influenced by the preaching of Griffith Jones (1683–1761), a clergyman based in Llanddowror, Carmarthenshire, and thus Rowland soon began to preach about the perils of sin in his community of Llangeitho, Ceridigion. Therefore, the birth of Methodism in Wales arose due to two unrelated incidents in separate locations. In 1737, however, Harris and Rowland were acquainted, and the pair began to work together to disseminate the Methodist ideals to a wider audience.

The pair successfully indoctrinated many communities in South Wales (particularly in the south west), and by 1750 over 400 Methodist societies had been established. The introduction of Methodism to North Wales did not happen for another 30 years, with its development largely attributed to the aforementioned Thomas Charles of Bala. At this point the Methodist movement was still part of the Church of England (see above). That being said, the deaths of both Harris and Rowland prompted a decision to be made about whether Methodism should

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<sup>25</sup> Wyn James, p.237.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.240.

remain within this framework. In 1811, the formation of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Connexion (which later became known as the Presbyterian Church of Wales) signalled the break from the Church of England in order to create a new nonconformist denomination. Nonconformists, or the old dissenters, had gained a presence in Wales by this time.<sup>27</sup> Essentially, nonconformists wanted the state and the church to become disestablished as they believed that the individual had a ‘need and right [...] to his own judgement, and thus his right to join, by agreement, with those like-minded in an independent congregation’.<sup>28</sup> However, while a number of denominations came under the title ‘nonconformist’, they did not form a cohesive body; for example, the ‘Baptists complained that Methodism with its fervour was invading its ranks’.<sup>29</sup>

It was precisely the fervour associated with Methodism that earned its followers the sobriquet ‘Welsh jumpers’. Here, the distinction between Wesleyan Methodism and Welsh Calvinistic Methodism is noteworthy; while the former, with its Arminian doctrines, was disseminated throughout England by John and Charles Wesley, it had a limited effect in Wales (unlike Calvinistic Methodism).<sup>30</sup> Not only did the two strands of Methodism differ in terms of theology but also, importantly, in terms of physical behaviour during worship. The fervent enthusiasm of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists frequently led to leaping and jumping throughout religious practice. This type of behaviour was not supported by John Wesley. In his diary entry for 27 August 1763, he recalls an account of Welsh Methodist worship described to him by a Mr. Evans. According to Wesley, Evans stated that Welsh Methodists “‘sing over and over with all their might, perhaps above thirty, yea forty times. Meanwhile, the bodies of two or

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<sup>27</sup> In an address to an Independent Assembly in 1838, Hugh Pugh (a minister) clarifies that the term nonconformity is multid denominational, including Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Unitarians. At this time, Methodists were not included (even though ‘they had refused to conform [...] by ordaining their own ministers’) as they did not acknowledge nonconformity as part of their denomination. Methodists did, however, later become associated with nonconformity. See E. T. Davies, ‘The Social Structure’, *A New History of Wales: Religion and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Dyfed: Christopher Davies, 1981), pp.13–34.

<sup>28</sup> Alan Luff, *Welsh Hymns and Their Tunes* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1990), p.59.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75.

<sup>30</sup> The principle theological difference between the two types of Methodism relates to beliefs about salvation. For Wesleyan Methodists (sometimes called Arminian Methodists), it is possible for all to be saved. For Calvinistic Methodists, however, salvation is only possible for those whom God has chosen.

three, sometimes ten or twelve, are violently agitated, and they leap up and down in all many of postures, frequently for hours together”<sup>31</sup> While Wesley believed the male worshippers (his gendered reference) to be ‘honest’ people who ‘[felt] the love of God in their hearts’, he argued that such behaviour during worship served ‘to wear them out and to bring discredit on the work of God.’<sup>32</sup> This was countered directly by Daniel Rowland who criticised the English practitioners of Methodism for their lack of enthusiasm. He retaliated: ‘You English blame us, the Welsh, and speak against us and say “Jumpers! Jumpers!” But we, the Welsh, have something also to allege against you, and we most justly say of you “Sleepers! Sleepers!”’<sup>33</sup>

One commonality between the differing Methodist strands was the recognition by both parties that singing could be used to support religious worship. A central feature of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism was the *seiat* (pl. *seiadau*; a word derived from the middle syllable of the English word society) or *seiat profiad* (English, ‘experience meeting’). A *seiat* provided Methodists with an opportunity to meet, worship, and more importantly sing. In fact, from the offset, *seiat* meetings (which occurred even before the break from the established church) were linked to singing. In 1742, a publication listing the rules of conduct for such meetings stated that ‘meetings should begin with the singing of praise and with prayer, before the members “opened their hearts”’ in search of guidance and encouragement.<sup>34</sup> In this context, the emphasis placed on the experiential cannot be understated; the notion of spiritual experience for the individual was a central feature of Methodism. However, it has been argued that this was a defining concept for nonconformism in general since adding the personal into religion created a sense of strong individualism that ‘tended to make religion an emotional thing. The emotionalism made it almost

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<sup>31</sup> A. H. Williams (ed.), *John Wesley in Wales, 1739–1790: Entries from his Journal and Diary relating to Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1971), p.66.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> R. Geraint Gruffydd, ‘The Revival of 1762 and William Williams of Pantycelyn’, in Emyr Roberts and R. Geraint Gruffydd, *Revival and Its Fruit* (Bridgend: Evangelical Library of Wales, 1981), p.35.

<sup>34</sup> Wyn James, p. 243.

inevitable that Welsh nonconformity should achieve its position of supremacy in Wales'.<sup>35</sup> This idea of emotionalism is crucial for the purpose of understanding singing, a collective practice, not only within the Welsh religious setting but as a marker of social identity for the people of Wales.

### **Building Chapels, Singing Hymns**

In December 1814, a reporter ambiguously titled 'Asiaticus' posted in *Seren Gomer* (*Star of Gomer*), a Welsh-language newspaper published in Swansea by the Baptist minister Joseph Harris or 'Gomer', a suggestion that nonconformist places of worship should be called chapels. Following over thirty years of calling them '*tai cyrddan*' (English, 'meeting houses'), he notes: '*gyda syndod y sylwais ar y cynnyg a waned i'w galw yn Gapeli*' (English, 'I noticed with surprise that it was proposed to call them chapels').<sup>36</sup> While it has been suggested that the writer in question had 'woken up rather late to [this] trend', the astonishment of such a proposal perhaps suggests that the word 'chapel' was not used readily among nonconformists in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>37</sup> Yet the relevant statistics show that chapels were built before the turn of the nineteenth century, with 1,300 nonconformist chapels recorded in Wales in 1801. Over the next fifty years the number of chapels continued to increase, with 3,800 recorded in 1851 (equivalent to one chapel constructed per week) and 4,716 in 1905.<sup>38</sup>

A religious census taken on 30 March 1851 revealed that Wales had become a predominantly nonconformist nation with almost 80 per cent of those attending a place of

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<sup>35</sup> C. R. Williams, 'The Welsh Religious Revival, 1904-5', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 3/3 (1952), p.243. However, Williams states that the importance placed upon the experiential nature of worship for the individual was countered somewhat by stricter rules concerning the observance of sacraments and the need for regular chapel attendance.

<sup>36</sup> *Seren Gomer*, 24 December 1814.

<sup>37</sup> Neville Granville, 'Chapel-going', *Morgannwg: Transactions of the Glamorgan Local History Society*, 47 (2003), p.25.

<sup>38</sup> Williams (1998), p.21; p.28.

worship doing so within a nonconformist chapel.<sup>39</sup> One of the reasons for this was the dramatic industrialisation of the nation with the rise of both the iron and coal industries; the demand for skilled workers prompted mass migration into the newly-industrialised areas (predominantly located in South Wales). Trevor Herbert importantly notes that much of the migration occurred within Wales (although some workers did come from England) as the population of industrial areas showed a marked increase while rural areas simultaneously dropped in numbers. He argues that this is important in terms of cultural homogeneity since, unlike other parts of the world where urbanisation led to the demise of native languages, it was actually the process of industrialisation in Wales that safeguarded the vernacular language.<sup>40</sup> Religion, specifically nonconformist worship, was also involved in this process. The primary method for communication between the newly-formed communities was the Welsh language, which was also the language of nonconformism, and thus a relationship between industrialism, language and religious practice was apparent.

As the new communities grew, an increase in the number of places of worship was required in order to accommodate the religious needs of the expanding population. While the developed areas were technically located within Church of England parishes, the parish churches not only represented the old, pre-industrial communities but were slow to respond to the changing needs of their local parishioners.<sup>41</sup> However, nonconformist chapels were built swiftly in order to cope with the increased demand. The fact that this form of dissenting practice (i.e. in opposition to the Church of England) was popular with the industrial workers is explained logically by E. T. Davies who correlates social class with religious belief; the social elite went to

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<sup>39</sup> Wyn James, p.229. See also Frances Knight, 'The National Scene', in Glanmor Williams, William Jacob, Nigel Yates and Frances Knight, *The Welsh Church from Reformation to Disestablishment 1603–1920* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp.309–29.

<sup>40</sup> Trevor Herbert, 'Popular Nationalism: Griffith Rhys Jones ("Caradog") and the Welsh Choral Tradition', in Christina Bashford and Leanne Langley (eds), *Music and British Culture, 1785–1914* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p.258.

<sup>41</sup> Luff, pp.75–76.

church, and the working classes went to chapel.<sup>42</sup> This was confirmed by George Osborne Morgan, a vicar's son, in 1870:

Churchmen in Wales were comprised almost exclusively of the richer portions of society. Every landowner, every country gentleman, every large farmer, and almost every professional man went to church, while every small farmer, small tradesman, and the whole of the labouring population went to chapel; so that they had in Wales a church kept up for the rich at the expense of the poor majority.<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, the distinction between those who attended the Church of England and those who frequented nonconformist chapels was exacerbated by the introduction of tithe payments in the early nineteenth century; 'tithes were traditional payments which entitled the Church to a tenth of people's annual income'.<sup>44</sup> In 1836, the Tithe Commutation Act put forward the notion that all tithe payments were to be made in cash, rather than in kind as was previously accepted. Parishioners were demanded to pay the tithe payments whether they were a member of the Church of England or not. As Wales was considered a predominantly nonconformist nation by this time, tithe payments sparked bitterness and anger towards the Church.

While the introduction of tithe payments showed how changes in religion affected people outside of places of worship, the development of hymn singing within was also the result of changes in Welsh religion. In particular, hymns not only aided the dissemination of sacred ideas, but they also included the nation's recent enthusiasm for congregational singing. Prior to the industrialisation of South Wales in the nineteenth century, there were two prominent hymn writers: William Williams of Pantycelyn (1717–1791) and Ann Griffiths (1776–1805). Williams, who is described as the 'father of the Welsh hymn', was a prolific hymn-writer with his total output estimated at 1,000 hymns (approximately 850 in Welsh), some of which continue to feature in worship today. By comparison, the output of Ann Griffiths was significantly less with just seventy three stanzas appended to her name, the majority of which were written down only

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<sup>42</sup> E. T. Davies, pp.13–34.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>44</sup> 'The Welsh Tithe War', People's Collection Wales website <[www.peoplescollection.wales/content/welsh-tithe-war](http://www.peoplescollection.wales/content/welsh-tithe-war)> [accessed 25 September 2013].



by Ruth Evans, Ann's maid-servant, who remembered them from Ann's oral recitations. While comparing the output of Williams and Griffiths, the difference in life span should also be highlighted (see above dates). Moreover, the work of Griffiths is noteworthy in terms of her gender. As Wyn James importantly highlights, female hymn-writers were scarce in Wales during both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which was in contrast to the prominence of female hymn-writers in England and America throughout the Victorian period.<sup>45</sup> In this matter, Griffiths stands out as the only female hymn-writer in Victorian Wales with a substantial output (that is, measured against other female contemporaries for whom only a handful of stanzas have remained).

A common feature between Griffiths and Williams, however, was the fact that they were both wordsmiths. While Williams (a Methodist leader) saw hymn-writing as a way to engage with his congregations, the writing of Griffiths formed part of a personal, spiritual diary; her work was only published posthumously (by Thomas Charles of Bala). However, since both of these figures produced standalone hymn verses, the choice of music to accompany the words for use in religious settings was particularly subjective. As mentioned, the use of the poetical metre had much to do with the matching of written verses to musical tunes. In the case of Williams, his use of metres favoured by English hymn writers meant that English ballads and tunes were often appropriated to accompany the Welsh hymns. In short, there were no rules in place to govern what was considered to be appropriate or inappropriate music for use in worship.

In 1838, John Mills (1812–1873) publically drew attention to the matter of music for worship. Although the title of his publication *Gramadeg Cerddoriaeth* (*Musical Grammar*) suggested to the reader that the rudiments of music were a foremost concern, Mills had a more profound question to ask: what music was appropriate in the context of the chapel (and the church)? He argued that there are three fundamental types of music: one, national or secular music (including

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<sup>45</sup> Wyn James, p.255.

traditional melodies); two, moral music which was uplifting in spirit and appealed to the notion of understanding (including ‘Classical’ or Western Art music); and three, sacred music. It was this latter category that most concerned Mills. He stated: ‘the undeniable truth is that church music in Wales these days is not only mixed with poor stuff lacking substance, but it is also tainted with worldly and corrupt compositions written for dances and theatres’.<sup>46</sup>

Mills suggested that this issue should be addressed in two ways: first, by creating new publications that dispelled the ignorance regarding suitable musical tunes; and second, by forming societies that allowed people to discuss collectively the standards of music in religious worship. Despite a passionate argument from Mills, the people of Wales were slow to respond to his suggestions. It is difficult to state the reason for this, although it could be argued that ideas regarding the standard of chapel singing were less of a concern to others. However, a series of events that took place in 1859 in South Wales, particularly in Aberdare (a mining area), changed the trajectory of Mills’ fate. The following figure relates to the principle people mentioned in connection with the events:

Humphrey Jones (1832–1895)	Wesleyan minister who prompted the 1859 revival.
Ieuan Gwyllt (1822–1877)	Calvinistic Methodist minister who published the first congregational tune book in Wales.
John Hullah (1812–1884)	Teacher and inventor of significant sight-singing method.
Sarah Glover (1786–1867)	Inventor of sight-singing method (tonic sol-fa).
John Curwen (1816–1880)	English Congregational minister who popularised and disseminated Glover’s method.
Eleazar Roberts (1825–1912)	Translated Curwen’s textbooks into Welsh in 1862.

**Figure 2.1:** Key protagonists of vocal pedagogy, 1859–c.1890

<sup>46</sup> John Mills, *Gramadeg Cerddoriaeth* (Llanidloes, 1838), p.187. English language translation published in Rhidian Griffiths (1989), p.38.

## 1859: Revival, Ieuan Gwyllt and Tonic Sol-fa

1859 was a landmark year in Wales. A religious revival described as ‘the most powerful and effective awakening of all those which took place in [nineteenth-century] Wales’, emerged in Cardiganshire in 1859, and later spread throughout the country promoting the benefits of religious worship.<sup>47</sup> The 1850s were not only important in terms of religious revival in Wales but, in fact, in other countries too. For example, Ireland was also experiencing the effects of a religious revival in 1859. However, the revival in Wales is believed to have been influenced by events that took place in America. In 1857, a revival led by Jeremiah Calvin Lanphier (1809–1898), a business man turned missionary, emerged initially in New York State before being transmitted to other states, particularly those situated in the Mid-West. Emigration from Wales to the United States had already begun to take place by this time, and personal accounts of the revival in America reached Wales through letters received from emigrants. The contents of such letters were discussed in ‘society’ meetings, creating an appreciation for what was happening in America and a desire to recreate a similar effect in Wales.

Humphrey Jones (1832–1895) was a key figure in the emergence of the 1859 revival. Five years earlier, Jones’ desire to become a Wesleyan minister within the South Wales district was quashed by officials who refused his application, a decision that prompted him to emigrate to the States. However, his stay was short-lived since he returned to Wales in 1858 with renewed vigour for his mission and buoyed by the personal experience of a positive religious revival. Jones was not alone in wanting to ignite a revival in Wales; other ministers who had experienced the revival in America were also keen to develop a format that would work in Wales. The resulting plan was delivered through a series of frequent prayer meetings, in which religious followers were

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<sup>47</sup> Christopher B. Turner, ‘Religious Revivalism and Welsh Industrial Society: Aberdare in 1859’, *Llafur: The Journal of Welsh People’s History*, 4/1 (1984), p.4.

encouraged to discuss both the American developments and the previous revivals in Wales (for example, the Llangeitho Revival of 1762).<sup>48</sup>

Although the 1859 revival emerged at first in Cardiganshire, the effects were felt throughout Wales. In particular, it has been suggested that the revival was most intensely advanced in industrial areas, such as Aberdare, which were newly-formed communities ‘struggling to adapt to [the process of] rapid industrialisation’.<sup>49</sup> Here, religious revivals were viewed as an antidote to a widening gap between industrial workers and both religious leaders and industry officials (i.e. coal owners). It was possible, therefore, that employers could utilise the concept of revival to promote not only the developments in religious practice but also to encourage good working relationships with their employees.

David Davis (1821–1884) of Maesffynnon, for example, was an industrialist who did just that. Davis and his father (also called David) owned a number of collieries in the Cynon and Rhondda valleys of South Wales. In his position as a coal owner, he arranged a series of prayer meetings (often timed to be held at the end of colliery shifts) which were not only attended by his employees but also by him and other managers. Although Davis was a follower of Wesleyan Methodism, the meetings were not associated with any particular denomination. It could be argued that the involvement of industrialists in the revival was intended to make the workers more compliant in the face of the harsh realities of working in a coalmine. However, Christopher Turner argues that ‘a mass movement of this kind could not have sustained itself merely by manipulation’.<sup>50</sup> In fact, it was the focus on personal expression that enabled the scale of the movement’s success and, in particular, the increased adoption of sacred music was seen to be the ‘most remarkable aspect of [this] particular revival’.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Turner, pp.4–5.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.8.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>51</sup> James Deaville and Katherine Stopa, “Singing in the Reign”: Voice, Faith and the Welsh Revival of 1904-1905’, in Martin Clarke (ed.), *Music and Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), p.119.

Attitudes to music and religion had been conflicting in the early nineteenth century, particularly within nonconformist places of worship where the notion of preaching had been viewed historically as the principle technique to disseminate ideals. Unlike many churches, the use of musical instruments was avoided in nonconformist chapels at this time since such instruments were associated with taverns, entertainment and disreputable behaviour. The form of musical involvement was thus confined to unaccompanied singing. Due to both the lack of instrumental backing and the scarcity of hymnbooks, congregations had to rely upon precentors who would lead them through hymns line by line. Precentors, known also as *codwr canu* (English, ‘raiser of singing’) and *dechreuwr canu* (English, ‘beginner of singing’), were therefore highly important for teaching the hymns as well as for providing the correct starting. Many precentors, therefore, owned personal handbooks of musical tunes in staff notation (the books were known as *llyfrau pricio*). This is the tune book of David Edwards, a precentor from Y Parc, Y Bala:



Plate 2.2: ‘*Llyfr Pricio*’ (c.1800) of David Edwards<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> ‘Congregational Singing’, item 3: David Edwards’ tune book no. 68, NLW website <<http://digidol.llgc.org.uk/>> [accessed 15 September 2014].

The transition from single lines led by precentors to four-part harmony, however, was not supported by all congregations. For example, the elder members of a congregation at Brynrhys chapel in Llansanffraid Glan Conwy (North Wales) believed that four-part harmony was ‘hardly conducive to a spirit of worship’.<sup>53</sup>

Yet it is known that Welsh congregations did eventually embrace this new form of harmony; the main propagator of its success was a Calvinistic Methodist minister named John Roberts (1822–1877), known colloquially as ‘Ieuan Gwyllt’ (‘John of the Wild’). The second major development (the first being religious revival) in 1859 is linked to the publication of a congregational tune book compiled by Roberts and entitled *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfao* (*The Book of Congregational Tunes*). Despite inheriting musical skill from his parents (his mother was a vocalist and his father was a precentor), he spent his early years working as a solicitor’s clerk in his hometown of Aberystwyth. In 1858, he moved to Liverpool to become the assistant editor of a radical Welsh newspaper named *Yr Amserau* (*The Times*), which was established by William Rees (‘Gwilym Hiraethog’, 1802–1883) in 1843. Roberts’ location in Liverpool not only enabled him to hone his journalistic technique but also to familiarise himself with the work of a number of eminent composers, particularly Bach and Mendelssohn. Moreover, his musical knowledge was supplemented by an association with the Liverpool Philharmonic Society and frequent trips to London to attend concerts.

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<sup>53</sup> Griffiths (1989), pp.38–39.



**Plate 2.3:** John Roberts ('Ieuan Gwyllt', 1822–1877)<sup>54</sup>

Roberts moved back to South Wales in 1858, settling in Aberdare initially to edit the weekly nationalist newspaper *Y Gwladgarwr* (*The Patriot*) which had been established in the same year, before moving to Merthyr Tydfil the following year to become a Calvinistic Methodist minister. However, he remained committed fully to the cause of Welsh chapel music and the publication of his congregational tune book was entirely self-funded. According to Roberts, its purpose was 'to provide the Welsh with a collection not only of good tunes, but of the best tunes, as far as I could judge, in the world, for congregational use, and at a price low enough for the majority of our congregations to be able to afford'.<sup>55</sup> He was the first to respond earnestly to the earlier plight of John Mills. The book was substantial containing 459 hymns, anthems and chants in total (although no hymn texts are included) with many being of a continental, particularly German, origin. The tunes were presented in an SATB format with simplistic, unadorned harmonies that were designed to enable the congregations to sing together with ease.

<sup>54</sup> NLW website <<http://www.llgc.org.uk/>> [accessed 15 September 2014].

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Griffiths (1989), p.40.

The overall purpose of the publication was, therefore, not only to prescribe appropriate tunes for worship but also to promote the very notion of singing together in congregations.

There can be no doubt that Roberts' personal enthusiasm for the publication had a monumental impact upon its popularity. Congregations were actively encouraged to adopt the book as a basis for all instances of religious singing; Roberts had created a standard repertoire of Welsh hymn tunes. Within three years of its publication, the book had sold 17,000 copies.<sup>56</sup> The book received a second wave of success in 1863 when it was reissued in tonic sol-fa (rather than staff) notation. The method of tonic sol-fa was brought to the attention of Roberts by a Liverpool-based friend, Eleazar Roberts (1825–1912), who had translated the textbooks of John Curwen into the Welsh language. The method of notation was seemingly well received since the revised edition of Roberts' tune book (in tonic sol-fa) sold 25,000 'almost overnight'.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, tonic sol-fa notation was cheaper to print than the old staff notation and its widespread appeal was aided by the abolition of paper taxes in the 1860s which made music publishing more economically viable.<sup>58</sup>

The popularity of the revised edition published in tonic sol-fa notation is unsurprising in some ways since tonic sol-fa had been the subject of a national movement in England since 1850. Its employment, therefore, signalled a wider significance within the United Kingdom. According to the American musicologist Charles McGuire, tonic sol-fa was 'part of a carefully

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<sup>56</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.26.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>58</sup> Newspaper taxes, or the 'taxes on knowledge' as they were also known, were introduced to Britain in 1713. They consisted of three components – a tax on advertisements, a tax on paper and a stamp duty on newspapers – each designed to inhibit the development of the newspaper industry. Following the Anglo-French war (1793–1802) as part of the French Revolutionary wars, such taxes raised and recuperated revenue for the government. In 1815, the stamp duty was increased to 4d per sheet, with the advertisement tax set at 3s. 6d per advertisement and the paper duty at 3d per pound in weight. This had the effect of restricting the circulation of newspapers to the upper classes. In the 1830s, however, such rulings were relaxed as a movement against the 'taxes on knowledge' took place. As a result, both the advertisement tax and paper duty were halved (in 1833 and 1836 respectively), and the stamp duty was reduced to 1d per sheet in 1836. Eventually all taxes on newspapers were abolished – the advertisement tax ceased in 1853, the stamp duty in 1855 and the paper duty in 1861. 'Newspaper Taxes, Taxes on Knowledge, Stamp Taxes', in Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (eds), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism: in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: British Library, 2009), p.454. See also 'Concise History of the British Newspaper in the Nineteenth Century', BL website <<http://www.bl.uk>> [accessed 13 October 2014].



crafted plan to improve people's lives [...]: to make such individuals morally upright, turn them into practicing Christians (preferably Protestant ones), and guide them to becoming efficient workers'.<sup>59</sup> Tonic sol-fa was thus more than a cheaper form of printed musical notation and an aid to the art of sight-singing; music, in this case, was viewed as a means of promoting both moral and Christian values. The last part of McGuire's quote is also telling in terms of the social class at which this method was aimed: the working classes. Both Wales (particularly in the South) and England (particularly in the North) had undergone intense industrialisation in the early nineteenth century, a process that 'produc[ed] an environment which was hostile and frightening to many middle class observers, who perceived large working-class communities which were intemperate, ill-educated, ill-disciplined and increasingly prey to the public house and the singing-saloon'.<sup>60</sup>

The emergence of Chartism in the late 1830s did little to change the negative perception of the middle classes. Taking its name from the People's Charter of 1838, Chartism was the largest political working-class movement the nations had witnessed up until this point, and its aim was to reform the political system in order to reflect a democratic society.<sup>61</sup> There was a keen awareness of the movement's aims in the public consciousness in the years 1839, 1842 and 1848 when petitions signed by millions were delivered to the House of Commons. Despite the need for such petitions to be aimed toward metropolitan London (the location of the Government), the ideals of the Chartist movement were supported ardently in Wales. Many of the people living in the industrial areas of South Wales were doing so in poverty, and such areas had become the focus for public anger. John Frost (1784–1877), a prominent Welsh leader of the Chartist movement, did not believe violence would help the matter and thus he delivered speeches

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<sup>59</sup> Charles Edward McGuire, *Music and Victorian Philanthropy: The Tonic Sol-fa Movement* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), xv.

<sup>60</sup> Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840–1914: A Social History* (Manchester: MUP, 1987), pp.23–24.

<sup>61</sup> The 1840s was also a time of political activism in Ireland. After campaigning for Catholic Emancipation throughout the 1820s, Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847) formed a mass membership movement in 1840 in order to campaign for the repeal of the Act of Union (1800), a legislative agreement binding Great Britain and Ireland under the title 'United Kingdom'. Instead, O'Connell and his Repeal Association demanded the right for self-government within the British imperial system.

dissuading the masses from any form of violent revolt.<sup>62</sup> On 4 November 1839, however, Frost led a protest march towards the Westgate Hotel in Newport, South Wales. The purpose of the marchers, who numbered in the thousands, remains unclear. The marchers were amassed from three groups (from Blackwood, Nantyglo and Pontypool), each of which had planned to meet outside Newport in order to march toward the hotel as a collective mass. However, as each group was delayed, the authorities had time to formulate a strategy. They responded by ensuring soldiers were present by the time the marchers arrived at the hotel. As they arrived, the soldiers opened fire on the protestors, and in a battle that lasted just twenty minutes, 22 men were killed and a number of others were injured.

While the Chartist period reflected a period of social unrest in Wales (and also in England) in which the issues of class and democracy were foregrounded, the same period also fostered key musical developments concerning a comprehensive method for sight-singing. Significantly, it was a system largely unconstrained by notions of class; it was an economical method designed to impart musical literacy to all. In terms of music pedagogy, the first system relevant to sight-singing was introduced in 1840 by the English teacher and composer, John Hullah (1812–1884). Hullah's first passion was to become an operatic composer. However after a few fruitless ventures, he channelled his efforts into singing classes for the masses.<sup>63</sup> In 1837, Hullah's interest was piqued by a published article in the *Athenaeum*, a literary magazine. Written by Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808–1872), the article concerned the success of free singing classes held by Joseph Mainzer (1801–1851) in Paris since 1835.

Two years after the publication of Chorley's article, both Hullah and Chorley journeyed to Paris hoping to learn Mainzer's method in order to introduce the system to England. Unbeknown to them, however, Mainzer's classes had been cancelled in 1839 due to a 'growing

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<sup>62</sup> 'Newport Rising', BL website <<http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/struggle/chartists1/>> [accessed 20 October 2014].

<sup>63</sup> His unsuccessful operas included *The Barbers of Bassora* (1837) and *The Outpost* (1838), both presented at London's Covent Garden.

fear of insurrection', and Mainzer had subsequently moved to London.<sup>64</sup> The trip for Hullah and Chorley was not entirely in vain since they attended instead the rival singing classes of Guillaume-Louis Wilhelm (1781–1842), who was a former pupil of Mainzer. Upon his return to England, Hullah was introduced to the secretary of the Committee of Council on Education, Dr James Kay, who was planning to use music (particularly singing) to aid elementary education, a system introduced by the Government in 1839. Kay, who had also observed Wilhelm's methods in action, sought to introduce a version of Wilhelm's continental method to England and thus he appointed Hullah as the music instructor of a new college in Battersea (from February 1840). Here, sight-singing flourished under Hullah's teaching and, in 1841, Kay secured further funding from the Government to produce weekly singing classes for schoolmasters and schoolmistresses (beginning in February and March respectively). With 400 teachers in attendance weekly, Hullah's method was widely disseminated not only to those in attendance but also to their school pupils.

The real advent of sight singing in Britain, however, is attributed to a method made popular by John Curwen (1816–1880) and his son John Spencer Curwen (1847–1916).<sup>65</sup> John Curwen differed from both Mainzer and Hullah as he did not possess a musical background; he was an English Congregational minister who considered himself 'completely without musical skill'.<sup>66</sup> In 1841, John Curwen was given the responsibility of recommending a suitable method of music pedagogy to a number of teachers in attendance at a Sunday School Union conference who had decided that church singing needed to be improved. While John Curwen had experience in educating young children in terms of literacy (he devised a reading method called 'Look and Say') and moral behaviour (as exemplified in his 1841 publication entitled *The History of*

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<sup>64</sup> Bernarr Rainbow, 'Mainzer, Joseph', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>> [accessed 20 October 2014]. While in England, Mainzer continued to promote the idea of music for moral reform and he established a regular periodical entitled *The National Singing Class Circular* (later known as *Mainzer's Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*), and a singing textbook entitled *Singing for the Million* (1842).

<sup>65</sup> For clarity, the father will be referred to as John Curwen and the son as Spencer Curwen.

<sup>66</sup> Quoted in Peggy D. Bennett, 'Sarah Glover: A Forgotten Pioneer in Music Education', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 32/1 (1984), p.49.

*Eleanor Vanner*), he had little in terms of teaching music.<sup>67</sup> In order to bolster his knowledge, he read texts on singing methods including Sarah Glover's *Scheme for Rendering Psalmody Congregational* (1835), which reportedly 'attracted [Curwen] because it had the dual stamps of practicality and religion upon it'.<sup>68</sup>

Miss Sarah Glover (1786–1867) was the eldest daughter of the rector at the church of St Lawrence in Norwich, England. She had been encouraged in music from an early age; an attribute that Peggy Burnett states was 'not unusual at a time when young English women were encouraged to study music to ensure a position for themselves socially, as well as for family entertainment and church teaching'.<sup>69</sup> However, it was not until her late 20s that Glover utilised the full extent of her musical knowledge as a children's teacher of music at her father's church. The sweet singing of her children's choir was received well by local parishioners, and soon people began to question how the children were taught. Young women in similar employment roles were sent to Miss Glover in order to learn her method in the hope that they would be able to establish choirs of 'comparable musicality'.<sup>70</sup> Glover's method was based upon the principles of sol-fa where each note is given a syllable (doh, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do) in relation to the other tones in the key. Unlike Hullah's system where 'doh' is fixed as the note C, Glover's system had a moveable 'doh' meaning that 'doh' was always the tonic of the scale. As McGuire highlights, each system has its benefits: 'fixed doh is good at imparting knowledge of relative pitch to the singer, while moveable doh focuses the singer's attention on intervals and the relationship between the tonic and other notes of the scale'.<sup>71</sup>

John Curwen was one person who specifically based his tonic sol-fa method on Glover's model. As mentioned, he had become familiar with Glover's teaching method and he began using a version of her method in his Sunday school in 1841. However, it is John Curwen who is

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<sup>67</sup> There were 14 editions made of *The History of Eleanor Vanner* in Britain and the United States. See McGuire, p.18.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Bennett, p.50.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.52.

<sup>71</sup> McGuire, p.11.

often credited (falsely) with the creation of the tonic sol-fa method in England. This resulted in a personal animosity between John Curwen and Glover that is recorded in a public exchange of letters. In a letter from John Curwen to Glover (dated 4 October 1841), Curwen states that although he considers Glover's method to be 'practically efficient', he suggests alterations 'in regard to the mode of presenting it to the eye'.<sup>72</sup> Among his suggestions is one advising that only small letters (rather than capitals) should be used. Nevertheless, Curwen reiterated that his method was wholly derived from that of Glover: 'I have only altered its outward form. The principle and the whole idea of the thing remain the same'.<sup>73</sup> However, in a letter to the *Norwich Mercury* (26 April 1879), one of Glover's assistants refuted the claim that Curwen had sought authorisation from Glover to alter the method. She stated:

In your issue of Wednesday, the 23rd inst., there is a letter signed "Tonic SolFa" in which the writer says Miss Glover was a consenting party to the change made in her system by Mr. Curwen. This I can most confidently deny. Her consent was never asked at all. I was at that time employed by Miss G.<sup>74</sup>

That being said, the tonic sol-fa method was far more wide-reaching under the tutelage of John Curwen. In 1843, he self-published the first edition of his *Singing for Schools and Congregations*, a publication that was influential in terms of attracting philanthropic interest which later led to the emergence of a national tonic sol-fa movement in 1850.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, its development was not focussed solely on lessons delivered by Curwen. In fact, there were a number of developments that served to justify that tonic sol-fa was both a successful and a sought-after method: in 1853, Curwen established the Tonic Sol-fa Association; in 1863, a publishing firm; and, in 1869, the Tonic Sol-fa College. It is unlikely that such developments would have arisen without Curwen's intervention. According to the musicologist Derek Hyde,

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<sup>72</sup> Letter reprinted in Bennett, p.58.

<sup>73</sup> Letter reprinted in Bennett, p.59.

<sup>74</sup> Letter reprinted in Bennett, pp.59–62.

<sup>75</sup> In his study of music and Victorian philanthropy, McGuire describes philanthropy as 'mak[ing] the individual into a better person while maintaining the code of the dominant society'. See McGuire, p.xviii.

Curwen was more successful than Glover in terms of disseminating the method due to both his sex (as a man) and his social position (as a minister). He notes:

Curwen had many advantages over Sarah Glover. Being a Congregational Minister and male, he was able to publicize and organize on a scale that was not acceptable or available for a woman in mid-nineteenth-century England. He was an opportunist, projected into a national figure by the growing momentum of state education, with music as a significant part of such education, and the explosion in adult education which was unequalled in its fervour until the present decade. In comparison, Sarah Glover was a provincial figure, out of her depths in such a world.<sup>76</sup>

The idea that the tonic sol-fa system was not promoted beyond the domain of local communities because Glover was a woman can be read in a number of ways. First, it must be considered that Glover's personal vision was not wide-ranging but instead focussed on the specific task of teaching music at a singular location, her father's church. By contrast, Curwen's vision was indicative of a musical empire, capitalising on the recognition that music could be used for social reform on a grand scale. Second, it has been suggested by McGuire that the tonic sol-fa system itself was entirely paternalistic. While the system taught members of the working and middle classes independence, moral reform and social improvement, he notes that it was 'paternalistic to the core [...] showing them their place within the rigidly hierarchical class system that continued to solidify throughout the nineteenth century'.<sup>77</sup> In this context, it was inevitable that a female such as Glover would be marginalised.

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<sup>76</sup> Derek Hyde, *New Found Voices: Women in Nineteenth-Century English Music*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp.108–109.

<sup>77</sup> McGuire, p.3.

18 AMSER—GWERSI.

Cymered yr athraw ofal fod gwahaniseth eglur a chan-  
fyddadwy yn cael ei wneyd rhwng yr | a a'r | a :—  
a rhwng yr | a a'r | a. Gofiedd befyd fod y curiad a  
haner, sef yr | a a'r | a yn cael eu gwned yn briodol.  
5. Wedi i'r dysgyblion fyned trwy y wers uchod yn  
foddol, gellir eu hyfforddi sut i ranu y curiad yn  
chwarteri ac yn drydeddau (thirds). Y llwybr goreu  
i wneyd hyny, ydyw iddo guro amser ei hun, a chanu  
ar y sill la, yn gyntaf oll, *guriadau cyfartal*, wedi hyny  
*haker* curiadau, yn ganlyniol, *chwarter* curiadau, ac yn  
ddiweddaf oll y drydedd ran o curiadau. Er engraifft,  
wedi iddo ganu curiadau, caned y gwersi canlynol, gan  
erfyn ar ei ddisgyblion ei ceflychu. Myner dysgu yn  
drwyadl wrth fyned yn mlaen.

Rhif. 1.  
Hannerau | a . a : a . a | a . a : a . a | &c. &c.

Rhif. 2.  
Chwarteri | a , a , a , a : a , a , a , a | a , a , a , a : a , a , a , a | &c. &c.

Rhif. 3.  
Trydeddau | a a a : a a a | a a a : a a a | &c. &c.

6. Wrth gwrs fe esponia yr athraw, fod yr haner  
curiadau yn cael eu dynodi trwy roddi dot rhwng y  
nodau sydd yn meddu haner curiad bob un; os bydd  
y curiad yn cael ei chwarteru, y dangosir hyny gyda  
gwahannod fel y gwelir uchod; a bod y trydeddau yn  
cael eu dangos gyda gwahannod wedi ei droi o chwth.  
Gwel Rhif. 3 uchod.

7. Dylid mynychu y gwersi uchod a'r cyffelyb nes  
bydd yr efrwydwr yn meddu syniad clir am amser cer-  
derol. Ar ol cael y syniad clir hwnw (ond nid cyn  
hyny) gall yr athraw eu haddysgu i guro amser yn ol  
y cyfarwyddiadau a welir ar tu dalen 11.

8. Dodwn yma ddwy o donau syml i'r dysgyblion  
eu canu. Argreffir hwynt yn yr hen nodiant, er mwyn  
yr athraw yn unig. Gosoder y merched a'r bechgyn  
gyda lleisiau uchel i ganu y linell uchaf, merched a  
bechgyn gyda lleisiau isel i ganu yr ail linell, meibion  
gyda lleisiau uchel i ganu y drydedd linell, a meibion  
gyda lleisiau isel i ganu y linell olaf. Mae y geiriau  
ar y tu dalen nesaf.

Gwers 19. Don C. M. 108. FINE. D. C.

d' : d' | r' : r' | m' :— | d' :— | 1 : 1 | t : t | d' :— |— |— | r' : r' | m' : m' | f' :— | m' :— | r' : d' | t : d' | r' :— |— |— |

m : m | f : f | s :— | m :— | f : f | f : f | m :— |— |— | s : s | s : s | s :— | s :— | s : s | s : s | s :— |— |— |

d' : d' | d' : d' | d' :— | d' :— | d' : d' | s : s | s :— |— |— | t : t | d' : d' | r' :— | d' :— | t : 1 | s : 1 | t :— |— |— |

d : d | d : d | d :— | d :— | f : f | s : s | d :— |— |— | s : s | s : s | s :— | s :— | s : s | s : s | s :— |— |— |

Plate 2.4: *Llawlyfr y Tonic Sol-ffa* (1862) by Eleazar Roberts<sup>78</sup>

But what did the advancements in tonic sol-fa mean for the people of Wales? As mentioned, tonic sol-fa was introduced to Wales by Eleazar Roberts who had translated Curwen's textbook into Welsh; *Llawlyfr y Tonic Sol-ffa* (*The Tonic Sol-fa Handbook*) was published in 1862 (Plate 2.4). However, the establishment of the Tonic Sol-fa College seven years later led to the consolidation of the new method in Wales. While the College was not based in Wales, the Welsh were able to study for the various qualifications (including diplomas, licentiates, advanced certificates and fellowships) offered by the institution. Welsh composers were seemingly keen to gain the formal credentials associated with music education; David Jenkins (1848–1915) was the

<sup>78</sup> 'Sol-fa', item 5: *Llawlyfr y tonic sol-ffa*, Eleaz[a]r Roberts, 1862, NLW website <<http://digidol.llgc.org.uk/>> [accessed 22 October 2014].

first to receive the advanced certificate in 1869, the year the college opened.<sup>79</sup> By the 1890s, the college was attracting more candidates from Wales than from England: ‘nearly 79 per cent (149) of the college’s 187 advanced certificates awarded between 1891 and 1895 went to Welsh entrants’.<sup>80</sup> Considering such statistics relating to the influence of tonic sol-fa in Wales, it is surprising that McGuire (who provides a lengthy assessment of the tonic sol-fa movement in Britain) does not consider its use in Wales.

While the introduction of tonic sol-fa to Wales ensured that the majority of those participating in group singing from the 1860s did so in a literate manner, a polarisation occurred between those who used tonic sol-fa and those who read staff notation. In this matter, musical periodicals of the era tended to favour one method; for example, *Cerddor y Tonic Sol-ffa* (*The Tonic Sol-fa Musician*, published in Wrexham 1869–1874), *Y Cerddor Sol-ffa* (*The Sol-fa Musician*, 1881–1886) and *Y Sol-ffaydd* (*The Sol-faist*, published in Pontarddulais, 1891–1892) printed their music only in tonic sol-fa notation.<sup>81</sup> One of the most influential periodicals, namely *Y Cerddor Cymreig* (*The Welsh Musician*), issued its musical supplements alternately in sol-fa and staff notations from 1865. First published in Merthyr Tydfil in 1861 (and later in Wrexham), *Y Cerddor Cymreig* represented a landmark in the field of Welsh music publishing since, in addition to printing musical supplements, it provided a forum for the discussion of the musical scene in Wales as well as a place where new compositions could be examined. Notably the creator and editor of the journal was the aforementioned Ieuan Gwyllt, who followed a precedent set by the successful London-based periodical, the *Musical Times* (first published in 1844).

Although tonic sol-fa did not teach its exponents how to read music in the conventional sense (through staff notation), its widespread use taught singers (primarily from the working classes) the basic rudiments of music such as rhythm, pitch and harmony. Moreover, tonic sol-fa

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<sup>79</sup> *The Brecon & Radnor Express: Carmarthen and Swansea Valley Gazette and Brynmanwr District Advertiser*, 23 December 1915. For Jenkins, proficiency in tonic sol-fa and music in general was more than a pastime. In 1874, he began studying at Aberystwyth College under the tutelage of the famous Welsh composer, and Professor of Music, Joseph Parry (1841–1903). Jenkins later received a Bachelor’s degree in Music in Cambridge in 1878, before returning to Aberystwyth to become a lecturer and later a professor (in 1893 and 1910 respectively).

<sup>80</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.32.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p.29.



played an important role in terms of formal education. In 1870, the Education Act (the first law specifically related to the provision of education in the United Kingdom) ensured that music was taught in all schools throughout England and Wales. In the early years following the introduction of the Act, singing was generally taught by ear without the use of either form of notation. As Dave Russell importantly highlights, the method of instruction changed from an aural to a literate mode of transmission when the government introduced a financial incentive; in 1883, schools were offered one shilling for each pupil taught using notation (either through tonic sol-fa or via staff notation), whereas those continuing to teach by ear were only to receive six pence per child (half the amount). Enticed by the promise of financial award, more schools committed to teaching singing by note; in 1891, 11,833 schools in England and Wales were teaching by ear (36 per cent less than in 1884), 15,153 schools were teaching with sol-fa (more than doubled from 6,773 in 1884) and 2,362 schools were using staff notation (an increase of approximately one per cent since 1884).<sup>82</sup> Here, the popularity of tonic sol-fa is evident.

In addition to its role in musical education (in both examinations for adults and for children in schools) and Welsh-language publications, tonic sol-fa played a significant part in the formation of a nation skilled in multi-part collective singing. Although children were instructed in the method from a young age (the school-leaving age was ten in 1880), tonic sol-fa singing was nurtured through religion in the community. Here, Sunday schools which acted as a context for musical learning were especially important. Moreover, the relationship between choralsinging and religious practice was strengthened further by two developments that occurred in Aberdare in the landmark year of 1859. First, the earliest Undeb Canu Cynulleidfaol (Congregational Singing Union) was founded by Ieuan Gwyllt, a union that brought together members of the community to sing from his newly-published tune book. In line with the popularity of his publication, similar singing unions were established in a number of locations across South Wales, including the neighbouring areas of Merthyr, Dowlais and Pontypridd (as well as Cardiff and

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<sup>82</sup> Russell, p.46.

Swansea), and also in North Wales (in Penllyn, Nant Conwy and Pwllheli). Second, Aberdare was the location of the first *cymanfa ganu* (pl. *cymanfaoedd canu*), a hymn-singing festival utilised by chapel choirs strictly to disseminate religious ideas while also improving musical worship.<sup>83</sup> In addition to singing, *cymanfaoedd canu* included lectures on musical topics. Unlike earlier temperance unions that merged choirs for collective singing, the whole congregation sang as a united choir in the *cymanfa*.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I have outlined the major religious developments in Wales which provided the framework on which congregational singing was based. In terms of a native form of identity, the use of language played a crucial role. Despite increasing pressures to anglicise religious services through their delivery and use of newly-imposed English-language publications, campaigners such as Salesbury ensured that the people of Wales were able to participate in their native tongue. Here, the creation of Welsh-language materials reflected more than a simple alternative to religious books in English. Importantly, Welsh was the language of nonconformist worship in which 80 per cent of the Welsh population were engaged in 1851 (according to the relevant census). Moreover, I argue that a tripartite relationship existed between religion, language and industrialisation in the mid-nineteenth century. Drawing upon the work of Herbert, it has been noted that the movement of workers *within* Wales to meet the demands of industrial labour promoted a form of cultural homogeneity not only through native identity (i.e. being Welsh) but also through language.

This chapter also showed how the promotion of Wales as a musical nation (a land in which people were enthusiastic about singing in parts) was shaped significantly by the emergence of tonic sol-fa in Wales. Although singing in general was practiced by both men and women (it

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<sup>83</sup> Such festivals were popular not only in Wales, but also in Welsh diasporic communities where the *cymanfa ganu* was (and continues to be) used as a means of expressing Welsh identity.

was inclusive), I contend that gender affected the development of music pedagogy in Wales. In particular, dissemination of Sarah Glover's pedagogical method was limited due to her social position (as a woman) and, as McGuire points out, because the system itself was viewed as paternalistic. The marginalisation of Glover in this instance prompts further questions about the involvement, and more importantly the representation, of women in musical endeavours in the relevant period (see also Chapters 5 and 6). More broadly, however, I argue that tonic sol-fa had a social function due to its development alongside the rise of nonconformity and a demographic explosion consequent to an increased economic output (iron and coal mining); it brought people together to sing in chapels. To highlight the importance of this matter, Williams notes 'if singing became the national preoccupation of the Welsh in the second half of the nineteenth century, sol-fa was the hinge on which the door to so much musical experience swung open'.<sup>84</sup> Together with the emergence of events such as the *cymanfa ganu*, it ensured that singing in Wales became a collective rather than an individual endeavour. In the following chapter, I detail the first major occurrence of collective singing in Wales on a national scale. Moving from the practice of singing in religious settings, I examine choral singing in a secular, competitive context with respect to the National Music Meetings of 1872 and 1873.

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<sup>84</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.34.

## Chapter Three

### **The Land of Song: Griffith Rhys Jones and the South Wales Choral Union, 1872–1873**

As Philip Bohlman notes in his study of music, nationalism and the creation of the New Europe, the choir (or ‘the chorus’ to use Bohlman’s terminology) has been utilised by European countries to represent a form of national identity for the past two centuries. As an ideal medium for cementing communal relations, the choir ‘at once envoices and embodies the nation, giving voice to all its citizens and harmoni[s]ing those voices in an emblematic unisonance’.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Bohlman argues that the effectiveness of representing a nation through choral performance is heightened when the performance takes place on stage. Here, the choir has the ability to form a connection with the audience, ‘symboli[s]ing for the audience its own selfness, as if to put the audience also on the stage’.<sup>2</sup> If staged choral singing has been utilised throughout Europe as a powerful tool for nation building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (particularly in the Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), to what extent was the same true in Wales? Was it really a ‘land of song’?

In order to answer such questions concerning national identity, this chapter moves from a consideration of music in religious worship (a performance context for which there is no audience) to an examination of choral singing in competitive settings. In particular, it traces the formation of the South Wales Choral Union, a large mixed choir led by the prominent male conductor Griffith Rhys Jones (1834–1897), who was more popularly known as ‘Caradog’. It charts the choir’s participation in competitions for the Crystal Palace Challenge Cup in both 1872 and 1873, when the choir’s successes seemingly earned Wales the title of the ‘land of song’. As the contests took place in England (rather than in Wales), I adapt Bohlman’s concept of

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<sup>1</sup> Philip V. Bohlman, *Focus: Music, Nationalism, and the Making of the New Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (New York; London: Routledge, 2011), p.71.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

‘audience’ to include how the choir’s performances were viewed at home since the cost of travelling to London would have no doubt prohibited the attendance of spectators from Wales.<sup>3</sup> With respect to the concept of nationhood, this chapter will present a discussion of repertoire and performance practice, as well as social developments (such as industrialisation). I show that the 1872 and 1873 contests served not only as a platform for presenting Welsh culture to a wider British audience but also provided an opportunity for amateur Welsh musicians to experience a new sense of nationhood through choral performance. Moreover, I focus upon the impact and wider social significance of the choir’s efforts by examining how the events were memorialised in the early twentieth century. First, I will begin with a biographical overview of the choir’s conductor, Griffith Rhys Jones.

### **The Making of a Master: Caradog**

Griffith Rhys Jones was born at the Rose and Crown Inn in Trecynon, a village situated near Aberdare in the Cynon Valley of South Wales. Like other areas in South Wales, the Cynon Valley was closely associated with industrial activity. The connection between community and industry had been established in the Valley since 1757 when the ironworks were constructed in Hirwaun, an area located at the northern end of the Cynon Valley. This development was not an isolated case, and four more ironworks were built near Aberdare in the early nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> An increased industrial production gave rise to an increased population; here, the population of the Cynon Valley rose from 1,486 in 1801 to 14,998 in 1851. From the 1840s, the industrial output of the area was doubled with the discovery of a coal seam at Cwmbach, another village near Aberdare. While coal was used at first to support the iron industry, entrepreneurial

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<sup>3</sup> To explain further, Bohlman notes that ‘when the chorus sings [...] the audience feels itself drawn to the edge of the stage, drawn even to the edge of song as it recognises itself on the stage’ (p.71). With respect to the National Music Meetings, I contend that the audience of the South Wales Choral Union hears its voice metaphorically rather than physically.

<sup>4</sup> There were five ironworks in total around Aberdare: Hirwaun (opened 1757); Aberdare Ironworks, Llwydcoed (opened 1801); Abernant Ironworks (opened 1801); Gadlys Ironworks (opened 1827); and the Crawshay Bailey, Aberaman Ironworks (opened 1847). For further information, see: The Gadlys Ironworks, Cynon Valley Museum and Gallery website <[http://www.cvmg.co.uk/cvm\\_eng/gadlys/index.html](http://www.cvmg.co.uk/cvm_eng/gadlys/index.html)> [accessed 27 April 2013].

figures such as Matthew Wayne (c.1780–1853) and Thomas Powell (1779–1863) soon realised that coal could be exploited in its own right. From the mid-nineteenth century, coal surpassed iron as the main economic output of Wales, a motion that was aided by the earlier repeal of internal shipment restrictions in 1834 and the abolition of government duty on coal carried by British ships in 1842. Moreover, the South Wales coalfields were conveniently located near to transport links (such as railways, canals and ports) which enabled Wales to become one of the most important industrial centres within and outside of the UK. In particular, the coalmines around Caradog's hometown were significant; in fact, Aberdare was dubbed the 'heart of the south Wales coalfield' before the neighbouring Rhondda Valleys (see Plate 3.1) were rapidly industrialised in the 1870s.<sup>5</sup>

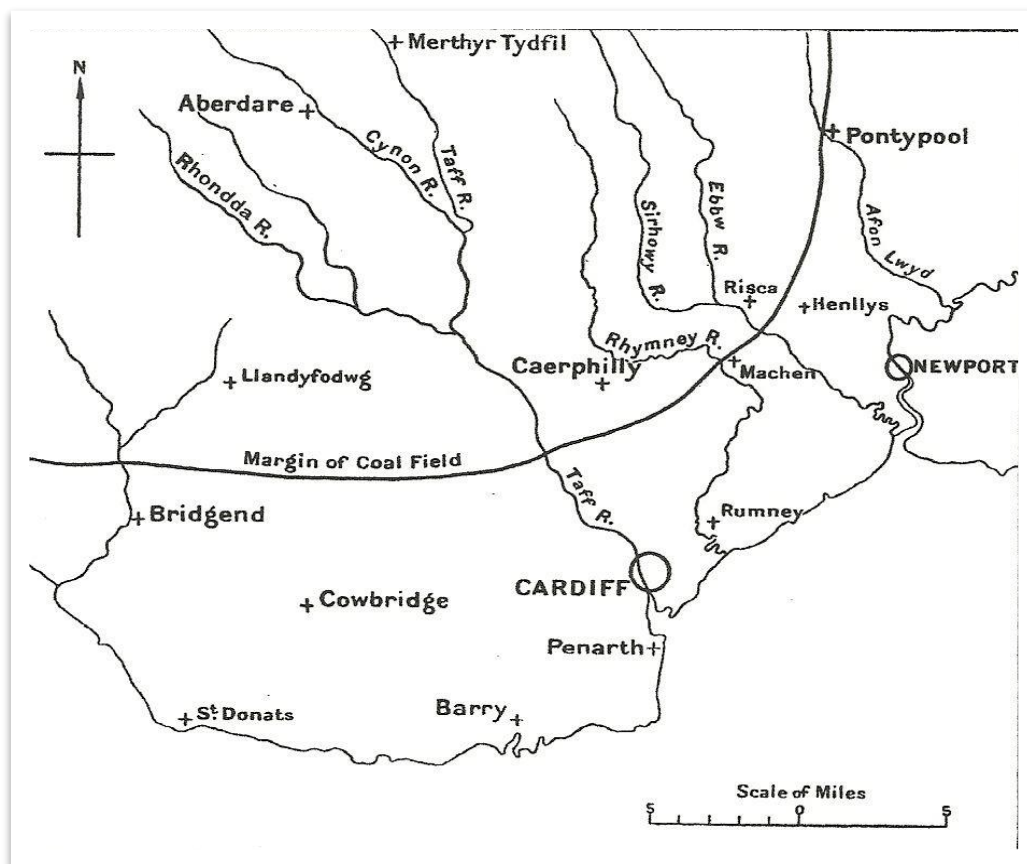
Geographical location was not the only factor linking Griffith Jones to industry; his family background was firmly working class with his father being a mechanic at the ironworks in Llwydcoed. Following his father, Jones left school at the age of twelve to work as a blacksmith's striker at Gadlys.<sup>6</sup> Despite this working lifestyle and early graduation from the education system, Jones was musically gifted. On 23 June 1853, he had his first taste of success as he led 17 members of the choir from Bryn Seion Chapel, Trecynon to victory at an *eisteddfod* held in Aberavon, Neath Port Talbot. The test piece for the occasion was Beethoven's 'Hallelujah to the Father', and the choir was awarded £5 for its rendition. However, it was the choir's name that was to have a lasting effect on Jones' future musical career. Following *eisteddfod* guidelines, the choir performed under the pseudonym 'Côr Caradog ap Brân' ('Caradog, son of Brân's Choir'); the name is linked to the mythological tales of the Mabinogion in Wales where Caradog is the son of the British king Brân the Blessed.<sup>7</sup> Following this event, Griffith Rhys Jones became popularly known as Caradog.

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<sup>5</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.35.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Wayne (former furnace manager at the Cyfarthfa Ironworks in Merthyr Tydfil) founded this iron company in 1827, with the help of two local men, namely George Rowland Morgan and Edward Morgan Williams.

<sup>7</sup> Professor Sioned Davies (Cardiff University) has published an English translation of the Mabinogion. See Sioned M. Davies, *The Mabinogion* (Oxford: OUP, 2007).



**Plate 3.1:** Map of the South Wales Coalfield<sup>8</sup>

Despite early success as a choral conductor, Caradog was also known for his instrumental skill as a violinist, for which he was nicknamed the ‘Welsh Paganini’. It is reported that Caradog learnt how to play from his older brother John, but little is known about John’s own ability as an instrumentalist. Although Williams questions whether Caradog’s virtuosic talent was indeed comparable to the Italian violinist, he notes that his proficiency was evident.<sup>9</sup> As a solo performer, he gave a concert at a Presbyterian chapel where the audience requested the ‘Farmyard Fantasia’. He obliged by providing imitations of animals, including a donkey, a turkey

<sup>8</sup> Map reproduced from A. E. Trueman, ‘Population Changes in the Eastern Part of the South Wales Coalfield’, *The Geographical Journal*, 53/6 (1919), p.411.

<sup>9</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.41.

and a calf, which highly amused the audience and simultaneously displeased members of the *unco guid* (the strictly religious) considering the context of the performance.<sup>10</sup>

Caradog was also involved in ensemble performances. As a member of the Aberdare Philharmonic Society, he played violin for a performance of Mozart's Twelfth Mass (with English text) at the Dowlais School Rooms on 23 February 1859.<sup>11</sup> Reactions to the concert appeared mixed in the press. According to the *Merthyr Telegraph*, the audience was 'attentive' (despite being 'not very numerous') and the music was received with 'great pleasure'.<sup>12</sup> However, the ensemble was criticised here for defining itself as an Aberdare society since some of its players were recognised as being from neighbouring areas and it was noted that 'neither of the chief performers [could] claim Aberdare as a residence'.<sup>13</sup> A letter to the same newspaper (printed 12 March) also critiques the performance, with its author commenting that the Philharmonic should have concentrated on 'quality not quantity'; such a remark was made as 'selections from the works of Handel and Haydon' (*sic*) were played in addition to the advertised Mass.<sup>14</sup> However, the author did praise the concert, describing it as 'one of the best amateur concerts' the reviewer had attended.<sup>15</sup>

The existence of the Aberdare Philharmonic Society appears to have been short-lived though since its activities fail to be featured again in local press accounts after the Mozart concert. Incidentally, articles or adverts detailing other musical events of the society prior to the Mass are also missing. As mentioned earlier, there is no doubt that Aberdare was functioning as an important centre for musical activities at this time. In addition to its location at the heart of

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<sup>10</sup> John H. Davies, 'Rhondda Choral Music in the Nineteenth Century' in K.S. Hopkins (ed.), *Rhondda Past and Future* (Rhondda: Ferndale, 1975), pp. 145–6.

<sup>11</sup> Tickets were available in advance or on the night, and were priced at 1s. 6d. for reserved seats, 1s. for second seats and 6d. for seats at the back or in the gallery. For concert advert, see *Merthyr Telegraph*, and *General Advertiser for the Iron Districts of South Wales*, 12 February 1859.

<sup>12</sup> *Merthyr Telegraph*, 26 February 1859.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Merthyr Telegraph*, 12 March 1859.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*



the South Wales coalfields, it was an area considered to be a ‘musical hothouse’.<sup>16</sup> Williams explains:

With the sacred and secular, the traditional and technological, the old rural and new industrial in juxtaposition, no area of activity was more lively than the musical, where business and capital invaded the culture of the ballad, and where professional outside instrumentalists and vocalists were welcomed as warmly as well-known local artists.<sup>17</sup>



**Plate 3.2:** The Stag Hotel, Trecynon, Aberdare<sup>18</sup>

Aberdare was also an area where the social division between pub and chapel culture was clearly evident. The supply of alcoholic sustenance seems to have been plentiful since there were 103 public houses operating in the area in 1853. On the other hand, nonconformist chapels provided a space for worship and social interaction for religious followers; between 1840 and 1870, 50 chapels were built in Aberdare. Such development was necessary to accommodate the increasing population of the area which had risen from nearly 15,000 in 1851 to approximately

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<sup>16</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.37.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>18</sup> The hotel was built in 1837. ‘Stag Hotel, Harriet Street, Trecynon’, item number 23874, Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service: Digital Archive<<http://archive.rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk/treorchy/>> [accessed 7 November 2013].

38,000 in 1871.<sup>19</sup> For residents, the polarity between the lifestyles offered by the chapels and the public houses was problematic since temperance ideals promoted by chapel-goers featured in direct opposition with the drinking saloons. The public house was musically significant (like the chapel) since it provided an opportunity to foster competitive spirit in the form of local *eisteddfodau*. For example, they were hosted at The Stag Hotel (see Plate 3.2) by its owner, William Williams ('Carw Coch' ('Red Stag'), 1808–1872). While competitive events in this context typically consisted of ballads performed to harp accompaniment, an *eisteddfod* hosted at The Stag in 1846 featured a choral category, for which there were seven entries.<sup>20</sup> Here, choral singing, a musical form that had been developed through sacred worship, was transferred to a secular context.

In the following decade, the 1850s, choral singing in the community was nurtured further when such *eisteddfodau* were transferred to religious settings, such as chapels, Sunday schools and temperance societies. The repertoire performed within *eisteddfod* programmes was expanded to include English and Welsh part-songs, hymns, anthems and, in some instances, oratorio choruses. In 1858, a temperance hall large enough to hold 1,500 people was built in Aberdare, a new space for both musical performance and social interaction. This venture also enabled annual concerts to be held in the hall, where both national and international performers appeared. Featured in such concerts were the following notable instrumentalists: 'the [royal] harpists John Thomas [1826–1913] and Frederick Chatterton [1814–1894], the pianists Brinley Richards and Alberto Randegger [1832–1911] and the Chevalier Lemmens [1823–1881], the distinguished Belgian organist [...], the flautist Paggi and the violinist E.W. Thomas [1814–1892], leader of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra'.<sup>21</sup> Singers included the British soprano Madame Euphrosyne Parepa-Rosa (1836–1874), the ballad singer Montem Smith (c.1829–1891),<sup>22</sup> and the Welsh

<sup>19</sup> Gwilym P. Ambrose, 'The Aberdare Background to the South Wales Choral Union: (*Y Côr Mawr*) 1853–1872', in S. Williams (ed.), *Glamorgan Historian*, Vol. IX (Barry, n.d.), p.192.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.194.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp.196–7.

<sup>22</sup> Dates estimated based on an obituary published in *The Musical Times*, 1 June 1891.

soprano Edith Wynne (1842–1897). It is clear therefore that the construction of the Temperance Hall in Aberdare afforded members of the local community opportunities to encounter and to gain knowledge of a diverse range of musical performers.

Community spirit, however, was fostered through participation, particularly in choral music. In 1859, Silas Evans (1838–1881) formed the Aberdare United Choral Society following the introduction of the *cymanfa ganu* by Ieuan Gwyllt in Bethania, Aberdare. Over the next ten years, the choir was led to victory under the batons of both Evans and Caradog at various points. In 1861, Caradog was responsible for securing a win with the choir at the inaugural National Eisteddfod, which was held in Aberdare (20–22 August). In 1863, Evans conducted the choir's winning performance at the National Eisteddfod when it appeared at Swansea. Here, two choirs, namely the Aberdare United Choral Society and the Cymdeithas Cwm Tawe (English, Cwm Tawe Society) choir (led by William Griffiths, 'Ivander', 1830–1910), competed for a medal, the first of its kind to be awarded for choral singing. Here, the aforementioned Henry Fothergill Chorley, music critic for the London-based literary magazine *Athenaeum*, was impressed by the Welsh choirs and remarked that he knew only of a small number of societies in England that could compete with them.<sup>23</sup> Later the same year (1863), Evans relocated to Swansea leaving Caradog as conductor of the Aberdare United Choir. Under his direction, the choir won 20 guineas and a silver baton at another *eisteddfod* held in Swansea (1868) and also a prize at one held in Newport (1869).

The success of the Aberdare United Choir did not go unnoticed in the press. Following the choir's performance at Newport in 1870, a report published in *Y Cerddor Cymreig* (*The Welsh Musician*) warned that 'unless choirs from Glamorgan and Gwent make every effort to beat them, before long people will begin to think they are invincible. For that matter, perhaps they are'.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> 'Swansea, 1863: the Rise of Welsh Choral Singing', National Museum of Wales website <<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/340/>> [accessed 12 November 2013].

<sup>24</sup> English translation provided in Williams (1998), p.43. Original Welsh text: '*Rhaid i rai o gorau Morgannwg a Mymny ymdrechu i guro y cor hwn cyn hir, onide mae yn sicr yr â pobl i feddwl ei fod yn anorchfygadwy. Dichon, o ran hyny, ei fod. Y Cerddor Cymreig*, 1 January 1870.

The association of Caradog's name with the success of this choir served not only to validate him as a competent conductor in general, but also to promote him as a contender for future choral ventures. Such an opportunity arose in spring 1872 when Caradog was chosen to conduct a Welsh choir at the first National Music Meeting to be held at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham later in the year.

### **The Inaugural National Music Meeting**

On the first day of 1872, an advert detailing the inaugural National Music Meeting appeared on the front page of the London newspaper, *The Morning Post*. It read (capitals reproduced from original source):

The directors of the Crystal Palace Company beg to announce that the FIRST ANNUAL SERIES of NATIONAL MUSIC MEETINGS will be held at the Crystal Palace during the ensuing summer. At these meetings Native and Foreign Choral Societies, Glee, Madrigal, and Part-song vocalists, cathedral and Church Choirs, Military and Volunteer Bands, and Amateur Solo Singers will be invited to compete for prizes.<sup>25</sup>

Although presented under the guise of the Crystal Palace Company, the idea for the meetings came from the music impresario Thomas Willert Beale (1824–1894), who sought to employ the competition as a means of improving the standards of amateur music making in Britain.

According to Beale, he was influenced by the earlier choral precedents of the *Orphéon* movement in France and the National Eisteddfod in Wales. Here, he prioritises educational benefit over competitive spirit stating that the approach was designed to enforce practical knowledge of music.<sup>26</sup> The *Orphéon* movement was established in 1833 by Guillaume-Louis Bocquillon Wilhelm (1781–1842), who 'had been experimenting with a new singing method based on the fundamentals of music notation and solfège'.<sup>27</sup> Later in the same decade, the technique was adopted widely in Parisian schools. Wilhelm disseminated further the method via free evening

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<sup>25</sup> *The Morning Post* (London), 1 January 1872.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), p.190.

<sup>27</sup> For further information, see Clair Rowden, 'Choral Music and Music-Making in France' in Donna M. Di Grazia (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Choral Music* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp.205–212.

classes, which were produced only for men after 1838 (women and girls were initially included). As it developed, the purpose for the *Orphéon* movement became ‘to provide structured leisure activity for the working and artisan classes’.<sup>28</sup> The success of the movement is undisputed since it has been noted that, by the early 1860s, there were 3,000 provincial *Orphéon* choirs, involving about 140,000 singers. In the context of the present chapter, there is a direct link between the *Orpheonistes* and the British music scene since some 3,000 French singers travelled to the Crystal Palace for a Franco-British meeting in 1860.

The use of the Crystal Palace as a context for musical activity was not unusual by the 1870s. The building itself was initially created to host the Great Exhibition at Hyde Park in 1851. Two years earlier, Prince Albert, who was President of the Royal Society of Arts, put forward the idea for an exhibition designed to showcase examples of industrial and scientific achievement as well as works of art, from both British and international sources.<sup>29</sup> However, plans to host the exhibition were uncertain since the 245 building design proposals sent to the Executive Committee were all deemed to be unworthy. The resultant design by Sir Joseph Paxton (1803–65) – a large structure made from iron and glass – first appeared in *The Illustrated London News* on 6 July 1850.<sup>30</sup> After gaining public approval, Paxton’s plan was adopted and the building’s construction was completed within the seven months before the Exhibition was opened by Queen Victoria on 1 May 1851.

The Great Exhibition was open to the public for six months, within which period over six million people visited from around the world in order to see some of the 100,000 items on display. In terms of music, over 1800 instruments were displayed, with ‘technical interest’ being the inclusionary factor over aesthetic matters.<sup>31</sup> Despite the presence of such instruments, musical performances did not occur within the space with the sole exception being repertoire

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<sup>28</sup> Rowden, p.208.

<sup>29</sup> Musgrave, p.7.

<sup>30</sup> Paxton had been working as head gardener at Chatsworth House, the Duke of Devonshire’s home since 1826, and was an ‘expert on greenhouses’. See Musgrave, p.8.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

played during an opening ceremony attended by the Queen. Upon the exhibition's closure on 15 October 1851, it was commanded by the Parliament that the building was to be taken down. Recognising an opportunity, Paxton created the Crystal Palace Company and sold shares in the organisation to raise enough money to buy the building and relocate it to its new site at Penge Place, in the South London area of Sydenham.

As part of the continuing musical remit at the Crystal Palace, the contests for the inaugural National Music Meeting were arranged according to the following classes:

I:	Choral societies not exceeding 500;
II:	Choral societies not exceeding 200;
III:	Choral societies for men's voices;
VI:	Military bands not exceeding 40 performers;
VIa:	Other military bands;
VII:	Bands of volunteer regiments;
VIII–XI:	Solo singers: soprano, alto, tenor, bass.

Attractive prizes were offered for each of these competitions: Class I, the Crystal Palace Challenge Trophy; Class II, £100; Classes III–VII, £50; and Classes VIII–XI, £30.<sup>32</sup>

In this context, the competition attracted attention from the United Kingdom, especially in Wales. On 17 February 1872, a meeting was held at the Temperance Hall in Aberdare to consider whether it would be desirable, or indeed feasible, to enter a Welsh choir. Potential problems including the financial implication of such an endeavour, as well as the relative lack of rehearsal and preparation time, were highlighted. According to T. Alun Davies (former Curator at St Fagans National History Museum), the motion in favour of entering was carried by just one vote.<sup>33</sup> Subsequently, a committee was formed to manage the venture, which included Revd Canon Jenkins, Vicar of Aberdare (Chairman), Dr Thomas Price, Aberdare Baptist minister

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.191. The description of each class is reproduced here from Musgrave. It is not noted why classes marked IV and V do not exist.

<sup>33</sup> T. Alun Davies, 'The Crystal Palace Challenge Trophy', *Amgueddfa* (1971); article reprinted in *Welsh Music*, 4/1 (1972), pp.28–29.

(Treasurer) and Brythonfryn Griffiths, registrar of weddings in Aberdare (Secretary). Here, it is worth noting that this secular venture was supported by religious members of the community. Although a number of capable conductors were available, it was decided that an invitation would be sent to Caradog to conduct the massed choir.<sup>34</sup> In addition to his former choral successes, he was recognised as a key figure in terms of choral singing in general. Precisely one month earlier, on 17 January, it was reported in *Y Gwladgarwr* (*The Patriot*) that ‘Caradog [was] sure to be standing in the highest class of merit, because it can be ensured that G[riffith] R[hys] Jones, [had] done more for the glory of Aberdare choral singing than anyone else’.<sup>35</sup>

The choir as a whole was to be constructed from a number of smaller choirs from across South Wales in an attempt to provide an ensemble representative of the whole area. It was reported in the *Aberystwyth Observer* that the only criteria was to be ‘good voices and [a] competency in reading music’.<sup>36</sup> The proposed number of voices (460 in total)<sup>37</sup> to be recruited from each of the localities was also publicised: Aberdare (150); Merthyr and Dowlais (60); Swansea, Morriston, Neath and Llanelli (100); Rhymney and Tredegar (20); Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr and Blaenafon (100); and Pontypridd, the Rhondda Valleys and Cardiff (30).<sup>38</sup> In order to test vocal quality, potential candidates were required to be heard by a number of ‘examiners’ who travelled ‘from chapel to chapel to pick and choose’, although it is unclear from the press what was involved in the selection process.<sup>39</sup> Following this, the actual number of singers enlisted (385) differed to the proposed quota shown above. The *Merthyr Telegraph* printed

<sup>34</sup> Herbert, ‘Popular Nationalism: Griffith Rhys Jones ‘Caradog’ and the Welsh Choral Tradition’, in Christina Bashford (ed.), *Music and British Culture* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p.264.

<sup>35</sup> Original text: ‘...mae Caradog yn sicr fod yn sefyll yn y dosbarth uchelaf o ran haeddiant, ohermydd gellir sicrhau fod G. R. Jones, wedi gwneud mwy dros ogoniant canu corawl Aberdar na neb arall y gwn am dano’, ‘Tysteb Caradog’ (‘Caradog’s Testimonial’), *Y Gwladgarwr*, 13 January 1872.

<sup>36</sup> *Aberystwyth Observer*, 17 February 1872.

<sup>37</sup> Here, the size of the ensemble is of interest in relation to performing nationhood. According to Bohlman, music can be either national or nationalist; the national is generated from within, with music represented by local groups and individuals on the stage. Nationalist traits, on the other hand, include an emphasis on external characteristics as well as emphasis placed on the size of ensembles. Here, music is represented by collectives and competitions on stage. According to these definitions, the National Music Meeting promoted a nationalist rather than a national performance of music. See Bohlman, p.60.

<sup>38</sup> *Aberystwyth Observer*, 17 February 1872.

<sup>39</sup> *Merthyr Telegraph and General Advertiser for the Iron Districts of South Wales*, 8 March 1872.

the selection numbers as Aberdare (93); Merthyr and Dowlais (81); Swansea (46); Llanelli (45); Ebbw Vale (75); and Pontypridd and districts (42).<sup>40</sup>

In addition to considering musical ability, selected members were also required to possess the financial means to be involved in the choir. Despite the fact that the majority of the choristers were working class and drawn largely from industrial areas, they were expected to pay one shilling upon being accepted into the massed choir, and a further shilling each month leading up to the contest, according to a decision made by the Welsh organising committee. Although an arrangement had been made by the organisers of the contest for free rail travel from central London to the Crystal Palace, the journey from South Wales to London also needed to be funded. At the time, the rail companies were offering significant discounts, and the price of a first class return from Cardiff was £1 (while a seat in a covered carriage cost half that amount).<sup>41</sup> With a large amount of choristers needing to be transported, the venture was decidedly costly. Several reports in the Welsh press mistakenly boast of the £1000 prize on offer for Class I of the contest. As mentioned, however, the prize was to be a specially-designed trophy worth £1000; unlike the other classes, a monetary prize was not applicable here, and thus the receipt of a financial prize (if successful) would not offset the initial travelling costs.

Nevertheless the choir, perhaps with false hope, set about rehearsing the required eight pieces. They were:

'In Tears of Grief' from <i>St Matthew Passion</i>	Bach
'The Night is Departing' from <i>Lobgesang</i>	Mendelssohn
'Then round about the starry throne' from <i>Samson</i>	Handel
'By Slow Degrees' from <i>Belshazzar</i>	Handel
'Nightingale Chorus' from <i>Solomon</i>	Handel
<i>Dixit Dominus</i>	Leo
<i>In exitu Israel</i>	S. Wesley
'All Creatures Now'	Bennet

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> T. Alun Davies, p.26.



It was noted in the competition guidelines that not all of these pieces would be required to be performed (although each would need to be learned), and that each choir would also be asked to sing at sight. Due to the size of the South Wales Choral Union, the pieces were learned at separate rehearsals taking place in each of the localities under sectional conductors (who had been appointed by the relevant local communities and not by the committee). Although musical literacy was seemingly a key factor in the admission of choristers into the ensemble, details about how the repertory was taught are not known. Since the Education Act was introduced in 1870 (two years before the first National Music Meeting), recruits for the South Wales Choral Union were presumably uneducated and therefore it is possible that the music was taught using tonic sol-fa; a popular contemporary method employed to teach music to the masses that were predominantly musically illiterate (see Chapter 2).

As the contest drew closer, a series of full-scale rehearsals took place across South Wales. Such rehearsals were scarce due to both the cost of travel to the various locations and the shortage of venues that could hold such a volume of people. It is worth noting that, due to dropouts, the final number of choristers for the 1872 contest was 349. Nonetheless, massed rehearsals took place on 4 June in Swansea, 12 June in Pontypridd, 20 June in Merthyr and 1 July in Aberdare.<sup>42</sup> In a bid to boost remuneration, members of the public were permitted to attend the final rehearsal held at the Temperance Hall in Aberdare. The sole ‘performance’ for the day was intended to take place at 2pm, however due to overwhelming public support, the choir sang a further three times (at 5pm, 8pm and 9pm) and raised £200 towards costs.<sup>43</sup> The choir departed the next day for London and in total, they were absent from home for one week.<sup>44</sup>

The contest was adjudicated by a number of eminent musical figures, namely Brinley Richards, an experienced *eisteddfod* adjudicator, W. Sterndale Bennett (1816–1875), an English

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<sup>42</sup> Caradog was unable to attend the rehearsal in Swansea due to a ‘domestic bereavement’, and therefore the massed choir was led by David Rosser, conductor of the Libanus Temperance Choir and secretary (alongside D. Brythonfryn Griffiths) of the South Wales Choral Union committee. *Cardiff Times*, 8 June 1872.

<sup>43</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.46.

<sup>44</sup> *Côr Mawr Caradog: Centenary Festival, Aberdare, October 2nd–8th, 1972* (Aberdare: G. Selwyn, 1972), p.13.

composer and pianist who was invited to Leipzig by Mendelssohn following ten years of training at the Royal Academy of Music, and John Hullah, an English composer, scholar and organiser of music for British training colleges. In particular, Hullah could be described as an ideal contributor to the Crystal Palace contests since, like Willert Beale, he believed that music could be used as a tool for self-improvement in societal matters. According to Hullah, 'music contained within it a moral force which could refine and cultivate individuals and encourage a sense of value and worth within the community'.<sup>45</sup>

Prior to the competition, the choir rehearsed briefly with the accompanying London-based orchestra. Of the test pieces, three were chosen for performance by the adjudicators: Bach's 'In Tears of Grief' (*St Matthew Passion*), Mendelssohn's 'The Night is Departing' (*Lobgesang*) and Handel's 'Then Round about the Starry Throne' (*Samson*). However, the choir's performance did not ensue without faults. In the latter piece, the vigour of the choristers' vocal entry supposedly startled the orchestra so much so that the players lost their place, which in turn affected the intonation of the singers.<sup>46</sup> Desperate to rectify the situation, Caradog was heard instructing the choir to listen to the orchestra. His attempt was in vain though and the choir was permitted to restart the piece. Moreover, Caradog's ability as a conductor was tested further with Bach's 'In Tears of Grief', composed in 3/4. While the choir had learned to sing the piece with three beats to the bar, the orchestra leader insisted that each quaver beat was to be conducted. With great skill, Caradog kept both parties happy by conducting in three with one hand (for the choir) and in six with the other (for the orchestra).<sup>47</sup>

Despite such obstacles, it was announced that the South Wales Choral Union was to be awarded the Crystal Palace Challenge Trophy as the winner of the Class I contest for large choirs. However, it is necessary to note significantly that there were no other competitors in the same category. This fact was particularly disappointing for Beale since he had visited several

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<sup>45</sup> Gordon Cox, *A History of Music Education in England, 1872–1928* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1993), p.8.

<sup>46</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.47.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.47–48.

cities (namely Leeds, Liverpool and Birmingham) in order to incite interest in this particular class, and suggested that a large choir could be formed from several existing smaller choirs. While such areas entered smaller choirs for Classes II and III of the Music Meetings, the idea of forming of a large united choir was shunned due to the lack of time available to learn the difficult repertoire, the expense of the rehearsals, and, most importantly, the cost of transportation to and from London.<sup>48</sup> While the same factors were pertinent to the South Wales Choral Union, the decision to compete in spite of such difficulties was deemed to be favourable. In fact, the choir's victory not only ignited celebrations throughout Wales in its immediate aftermath, but also, in time, contributed significantly towards defining the country as a 'land of song'.

### **Celebrating the Victory**

As expected, news of the choir's success was reported enthusiastically in the press in Wales and was celebrated heartily around South Wales, particularly in the areas that acted as bases for the smaller sections of the massed choir. For example, a crowd of 5,000 gathered in Neath to welcome the choristers, whose achievement was celebrated musically with a brass band and a vocal rendition of 'Men of Harlech' as the procession arrived in the town centre.<sup>49</sup> Once again, the piece is associated with pride and national identity (see Chapter 1). However, it is evident from a number of newspaper reports produced in Wales that the vocal performance itself (as opposed to simply celebrating the accolade) was an important factor to discuss in relation to the contest. The *Merthyr Telegraph* reported that 'the singing by the Welsh choir was pronounced by the judges to be "magnificent, faultless in time, perfect in expression, and exemplifying the life of

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<sup>48</sup> T. Alun Davies, p.26.

<sup>49</sup> Herbert, p.268.

the music”<sup>50</sup>. According to the *Monmouthshire Merlin*, the Welsh voices ‘had a freshness [...], were nicely balanced, [and] the harmonies were well preserved’.<sup>51</sup>

The word ‘victory’ is used frequently among such reports, which is interesting since the word itself suggests superiority over another party, that the Welsh choir fought against another for the title and Challenge Cup. As discussed, this was not the case. Herbert acknowledges that ‘the fact there had been no real contest was ignored’.<sup>52</sup> However, this was not wholly true since the fact that Class I lacked competitors was highlighted in the press in both Wales and England (although it is the Welsh press that will be discussed especially here). The following telegram was reproduced in the *Aberdare Times*:

Crystal Palace, July 4, 4.10pm – The challenge prize of £1,000 has been awarded to the Welsh Choir. No competition. [...] The Palace was crowded. The choir was enthusiastically received.<sup>53</sup>

On the same day (6 July 1872), the reason for the lack of opponents was discussed somewhat speculatively in the Cardiff press. The *Cardiff Times* reported:

when, on reaching the Palace, it was discovered there had been found no choir courageous enough to compete with the South Wales Union. How that arose no official information could be obtained. That there were competitors at one time was well known; but why they did not come forward to contest the prize publicly none in authority would say. It was told privately, however, that they had heard the Welsh Choir, and they admired them so highly as singers, that they would not like them at all as rivals, and so withdrew. If this be true, a more complete victory for Wales cannot be imagined.<sup>54</sup>

Another local newspaper took the idea further by asserting that ‘the only two choirs that entered into competition for the prize were the Bristol Choirs and the South Wales Union. The Bristol Choirs withdrew from the contest [...]’.<sup>55</sup> While the accuracy of such information is unclear, the

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<sup>50</sup> *Merthyr Telegraph and General Advertiser for the Iron Districts of South Wales*, 5 July 1872.

<sup>51</sup> *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 5 July 1872.

<sup>52</sup> Herbert, p.268.

<sup>53</sup> *Aberdare Times*, 6 July 1872.

<sup>54</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 6 July 1872.

<sup>55</sup> *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 6 July 1872.

discussion itself shows that accounts in the press were attempting to validate the ‘victory’ of the South Wales Choral Union by explaining the lack of rival competitors.

Meanwhile, press accounts in England tended to focus upon another issue, namely the social class of the choir. Although working-class choirs were seemingly active in northern England during the nineteenth-century, Dave Russell argues that the membership to such choirs was not always confined to the lower social orders. He explains: ‘there has long existed an assumption, originating in the nineteenth century and still prevalent today, that a provincial accent, especially a Northern one, inevitably denotes working-class origin’.<sup>56</sup> He argues that this was not necessarily true (although working-class choirs did exist). However, the South Wales Choral Union was firmly working class, and the social position of the choir was not unnoticed either by the choir or by the people of Wales. In this matter, a correspondent of *Y Cerddor Cymreig* commented:

We were greatly amused by the amazement of our neighbours that a choir from the working classes conducted by a blacksmith could sing so magnificently. Our neighbours’ knowledge of the Principality must be poor, or else they would have realized that it is our working class that does almost everything [...] From this class come men to fill our pulpits, to teach our children, to edit and write our periodicals and newspapers, to compose our songs and melodies, to adjudicate and compete. This is the rule, and exceptions to this rule are rare. [...] We are grateful to the South Wales Choral Union for opening the eyes of our neighbours, yea, and many of our fellow-countrymen besides, to appreciate the status and the industry of our nation.<sup>57</sup>

In a reception held to mark the end of the inaugural National Music Meeting contests in 1872, thoughts were already being made regarding the following year’s events, particularly the Class I choral competition. Henry Richard (1812–1888, Member of Parliament for Merthyr), who was in attendance at the function, advised the choir to come ‘prepared to fight against the best choirs’ in the following summer.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Hullah confessed that the choir’s performance was flawed at times and they ‘would probably find strong competition next time’.<sup>59</sup> With this in

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<sup>56</sup> Russell, p.200.

<sup>57</sup> Original Welsh text from *Y Cerddor Cymreig* (1 August 1872) is provided in English translation in T. Alun Davies, p.24.

<sup>58</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 6 July 1872.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

mind, preparations for the 1873 contest began in South Wales soon after the choristers returned to Wales.

With a desire to attract more competitors, however, the organising committee made a number of changes within the Crystal Palace Company. First, in a bid to offset travel expenses, a monetary prize of £100 was offered in addition to the Challenge Cup trophy for the winners of the Class I category (the only category not offering a financial reward in 1872). Second, choristers competing at the 1873 contest would not be required to sight-sing. Third, the number of test pieces to be prepared in advance was reduced from eight to five. Here, it is suspected that the organisers realised that the requirements expected from the amateur choirs were unrealistic.

The following pieces were prescribed:

'The many rend the skies' from <i>Alexander's Feast</i>	Handel
'See what love hath the Father' from <i>St Paul</i>	Mendelssohn
'Hallelujah to the Father' from <i>The Mount of Olives</i>	Beethoven
'Come with torches' from <i>Walpurgis Night</i>	Mendelssohn
'I wrestle and pray'	Bach
[Dies Irae from Requiem in C minor	Cherubini] <sup>60</sup>

It must be stated again that the repertoire chosen here reflects a Germanocentric notion of musical practice. Interestingly, the choice of Beethoven's 'Hallelujah to the Father' was particularly pertinent for Caradog since it was the same piece he conducted in 1853 when he earned a prize of £5 and his epithet 'Caradog'.

In the preparations for the 1873 competition, Willert Beale travelled once again to number of English towns in a bid to provoke interest. While he was successful in convincing a small choir from Liverpool to enter Class II (choral societies not exceeding 200), he received no response from the communities in Birmingham, Leeds, Bradford or Manchester. The South Wales Choral Union was not to compete alone once more though. Instead, they faced competition in the form of one other choir, namely the London-based Tonic Sol-fa Association

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<sup>60</sup> Sources related to the repertoire for the 1873 competition seem to differ; in addition to the pieces recorded above, T. Alun Davies' account notes that the programme also featured the Dies Irae from Cherubini's Requiem in C minor (see T. Alun Davies, p.27). At present, it is unclear whether this information is correct.

choir conducted by Joseph Proudman (n.d.).<sup>61</sup> Proudman was not unfamiliar with the format of the National Music Meetings, having entered a choir of less than 200 in 1872 and winning the Class II competition. Unlike the South Wales Choral Union, Proudman's choir benefitted financially (£100) from their success. In order to meet the criteria for Class I (choral societies not exceeding 500), the number of singers in Proudman's choir for 1873 was increased to around 350.

Despite already fulfilling the criteria in terms of chorister numbers, the South Wales Choral Union also increased its membership to 446. The following sectional breakdown was published in a *Western Mail* supplement entitled 'Sketches about Wales':<sup>62</sup>

<i>Section/Conductor</i>	<i>Sopranos</i>	<i>Altos</i>	<i>Tenors</i>	<i>Basses</i>	<i>Total</i>
Aberdare/R. Evans	24	14	24	13	75
Mountain Ash / D. Coleman	7	6	6	10	29
Merthyr/ L. Morgan	12	11	16	22	61
Pontypridd/ R. Evans	8	5	13	11	37
Treherbert etc./ Caradog	9	7	11	10	37
Tongwynlais/ E. Bagley	4	3	3	1	11
Neath/ W. Matthews	5	7	10	13	35
Swansea/ S. Evans	8	9	13	12	42
Cwmavon/ J. Richards	11	10	6	11	38
Maesteg/ D. Jenkins	5	8	12	11	36
Llanelly/ W. T. Rees	12	11	12	10	45
<b>Total:</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>446</b>

<sup>61</sup> Proudman was known for his engagement with both the tonic sol-fa movement and choral singing. In 1867, responding to an advert in the press, he took a mixed choir of 70 to Paris to compete against a number of choirs from the Continent at the Exposition Universelle. In fact, Proudman's choir was the only competitor to represent England, and views of English vocal practice were less than favourable on the Continent at this time. That being said, both the adjudicators and the audience were impressed by the choir's performance. The performance was disqualified, however, precisely because the choir was mixed-gender; the advert did not specify that the ensembles had to be single-sex, and more specifically, all-male. Due to its impressive performance, the choir was awarded a prize wreath and a gold medal. It is for this reason that his choir competing at the Crystal Palace was known also as the Paris Prize Choir. See 'English Singing in Paris', *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 19 December 1867.

<sup>62</sup> SCOLAR: WG4.M, Owen Morgan, *Sketches about Wales* (Cardiff: Western Mail, 1875).

The idea of defending their title was an act that was taken seriously by the Welsh choir. In fact, to ensure that each sectional rehearsal was producing the desired quality performance, ‘examiners’ were despatched; the Aberdare district was cared for by Thomas Davies (‘Eos Rhondda’), Dewi Alaw and Richard Jones, Llanelli by Alaw Ddu, Merthyr by David Francis, Swansea by Silas Evans (he was the conductor of the Swansea rehearsals) and rehearsals in the Rhondda Valleys were organised by Caradog.<sup>63</sup>

The competition was held at the Crystal Palace on 10 July 1873. On this occasion, the adjudicators were John Goss (1800–1880), English composer and Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, Julius Benedict (1804–1885), a German-born conductor and composer, and Joseph Barnby (1838–1896), English composer and conductor. In contrast to the difficulties faced by a panic-stricken Caradog in the previous year, the performance of the South Wales choir could not have made a more marked contrast; it was calm, measured and the clarity of vocal articulation was favoured over power. In fact, the affair was so restrained that not only did the choir take forty minutes to assemble on the stage, but it also paused for a further ten minutes for a photograph to be taken.<sup>64</sup> While unfortunately this photograph cannot be located at present, details about its occurrence appeared in the press. Here, the choir is said to have been lacking a uniform dress, each member instead choosing their own outfit; the women were ‘attired in tight-waisted Sunday best, and the men in the dark cloth they too reserved for formal occasions’.<sup>65</sup>

The performance by Proudman’s choir was flawed with the choir breaking down in Mendelssohn’s ‘Come with torches’. However, the judges praised both choirs but the Challenge Cup trophy and the title was awarded once again to the Welsh choir. It is reported that John Curwen commented that Caradog’s choir ‘was not the same choir as the year before’; this providing evidence that the choir’s efforts were clearly recognisable to those also present at the

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<sup>63</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.50.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.51.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, pp.51–52.



previous year's competition.<sup>66</sup> Upon the announcement of the choir's victory, celebratory cheers and songs were given by Welsh members of the audience at the Crystal Palace (many of whom stood on their chairs) and numerous telegrams were sent to convey the news to the communities in South Wales.

Celebrations in South Wales took place in the same manner as the previous year. *The Aberdare Times* reported:

On the arrival of the train at 8.30 p.m. the excitement became intense [...] loud cheers were given by the assembled thousands, intermingled with the bursting of fog signals, the firing of cannon, and what with the ringing of bells and the playing of the band the scene may be more easily imagined than described.<sup>67</sup>

It is apparent that the participation of the South Wales Choral Union in the Crystal Palace contests was publically supported and competitively driven. For this reason, it is unsurprising that the decision to compete in the following year's contest (1874) was, once again, eagerly discussed. It was falsely believed that the Challenge Cup would become permanently housed in Wales following three consecutive wins, although the competition rules did not confirm this belief.

In contrast to the previous years, there was opposition to the venture notably from Moses Owen Jones (1842–1908), a local historian, musician and schoolmaster from Treherbert, and also unexpectedly from Caradog. In a meeting held at Cawaria Hall in Aberdare on 23 October 1873, Caradog stood to oppose the proposal that the choir should compete the following year. His reasons were two-fold: first, he was frustrated that the Crystal Palace Company had once again altered the repertoire for the contest; and second, he aired his concerns that the responsibilities of his occupation (as a blacksmith) would not allow him sufficient time to teach the music to the choir.<sup>68</sup> The proposed repertoire in question was: 'See from his post' from Handel's *Belshazzar*; 'The people shall hear' also Handel, Bach's 'Be not afraid' (a motet);

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<sup>66</sup> T. Alun Davies, p.32.

<sup>67</sup> *Aberdare Times*, 19 July 1873.

<sup>68</sup> *Western Mail*, 23 October 1873.

Haydn's 'Hark, the deep tremendous'; '[The Ballad of] Sir Patrick Spens' by Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795–1856); and, Mendelssohn's 'As the hart pants'.<sup>69</sup>

Moreover, it was known that a similar choir had recently been established in North Wales (September 1873). The North Wales Choral Union was modelled on that of the South with rehearsals taking place across different districts; the full choir of 440 members did not meet until May the following year. In particular, Caradog felt that it would be unfair to compete against the North Walian singers who were also interested in entering the competition at the Crystal Palace. Others, on the other hand, believed that it would be 'dangerous to entrust the credit of musical Wales to the North alone' and that entering two Welsh choirs would give Wales as a nation a double chance of securing another victory.<sup>70</sup> Despite the reservations made by Caradog and Jones, the 1874 venture was backed by representatives from Aberdare, Merthyr, Maesteg, Llanelli and Cwmafan, and it was decided that they would compete again. However, the Crystal Palace Company failed to hold a National Music Meeting in 1874 as its summer proceedings were dominated by the Handel Festival, an event held triennially since 1859; it was originally planned that the two events would run concurrently.<sup>71</sup> With the decision to forgo the organisation of the event not only in 1874 but in subsequent years too, the continuation of the South Wales Choral Union as both a competing choir and as an outlet for social interaction was halted. The choir did not continue to rehearse without the goal of a national competition. Music here was about more than participation.

In 1875, the Music Meetings were restored by the Crystal Palace Company with greater emphasis on solo singing, which was programmed for three days out of the four-day programme. The remaining day's events were shared between choral singing, brass bands and certificates for merit.<sup>72</sup> Not only did the contest for the Challenge Cup not occur, it was not mentioned at all. The trophy itself was therefore reclaimed from the Welsh choir by the Crystal

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Musgrave, p.193.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Palace Company and was later used for the National Brass Band championships held between 1900 and 1939. While the competition for the Challenge Cup and the existence of the South Wales Choral Union ceased in 1873, the achievements of the choir resonated throughout Wales for years to come. This occurred not only in the immediate aftermath of the contests (1872–1873), but also into the following century.

### Memorialising the Victory

The success of the South Wales Choral Union was marked in a number of ways. First, physical objects or items of memorabilia which featured either as one-off celebratory pieces<sup>73</sup> or massed items that were available for purchase (such as cravats emblazoned with Caradog's figure). Second, the choir's victories were fixed historically in written forms such as poems and ballads which were often printed in local newspapers. In addition, a one-page collection of poems was published in Aberystwyth by William Williams under the title 'Buddugoliaeth y Côr Cymreig yn y Crystal Palace yn 1872–73' ('Victory of the Welsh Choir in the Crystal Palace in 1872–73').<sup>74</sup> It includes a poem entitled 'Anturiodd Ein Cantorion – i Fyny' ('Our Singers Ventured – Upwards') by Coslett Coslett ('Carnelian', 1834–1910), a collier and poet from Pontypridd, and another entitled 'Hwra! Hen Walia Wiwlon – Curo'r Byd' ('Hoorah! Worthy old Wales – beating the world') by William Abraham ('Abram Fardd', 1820–1892).

The final poem in the set is written by an anonymous author and is also untitled; it begins with the line: '*mae llawer iawn o ieithoedd*' (English, 'there are very many languages').

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<sup>73</sup> A flag featuring the portraits of Caradog and members of the organising committee was presented to the choir by Howell's drapery store (situated on St Mary Street, Cardiff) on 5 July 1873, and was exhibited to the public at the store prior to the contest. Post-competition, a silk cloth, printed in the Welsh language, was presented to the South Wales Choral Union by the people of Caernarfon. A public meeting was held on 11 July 1873, the day after the contest, in which the choir's victory was celebrated with speeches and musical entertainment; the Royal military band played selections of Welsh folksongs and the Philharmonic Society was also present. A committee chaired by Edward Foulkes ('Iorwerth Glan Peris'), member of the Town Council, unanimously proposed that they 'regard[ed] this victory as an honour to [their] country and nation' (translated from the original Welsh text). This piece in itself highlights the national impact of the choir's efforts at the Crystal Palace, since Caernarfon is situated on the coast of North Wales. Casglu'r Tlysau / Gathering the Jewels: the Website for Welsh Cultural History <[www.gtj.org.uk](http://www.gtj.org.uk)> [accessed 1 March 2013].

<sup>74</sup> Original located at Cardiff University Library: Special Collections and Archives (item no. WG35.2.905). The exact date of publication is unknown, but it is estimated that the likely year of publication would have been 1873.

Interestingly, the same anonymous poem was published as a broadside ballad by Griffith & Sons in Cwmavon under the title ‘Cân Newydd’ (‘New Song’). While the printed source does not include any musical notation, it is clear from the title and the arrangement of the text (stanza verses with a repeating chorus) that the text was to be presented in a musical form. Indeed, the ballad has been recorded by Dafydd Idris Edwards (n.d.), chairperson of the Welsh Folk-Song Society.<sup>75</sup> In terms of syllabic structure, the ballad follows a strict alternating pattern of seven and six syllables for each stanza. The chorus, however, follows a 6/6/7/6 pattern as shown in the text below:

**Broadside Ballad:** ‘Cân Newydd: Buddugoliaeth Côr Mawr y Cymry yn y Crystal Palace’

	Welsh Syllabic count:	English translation:
<i>Mae llawer iawn o ieithoedd</i>	7	There are a lot of languages,
<i>Yn bod o fewn y byd,</i>	6	Existing in the world,
<i>Rhai feddant ar bob adeg</i>	7	Some say they are always
<i>Enwogrwydd mawr o hyd;</i>	6	Greatly renowned still;
<i>Ond er mor enwog ydynt,</i>	7	But as famous as they are,
<i>Ac er mor fawr eu bri,</i>	6	And as big as their prestige is,
<i>Mwy annyl a mwy enwog</i>	7	More dear and more famous,
<i>Yw'r hen Gymraeg i mi.</i>	6	Is the old Welsh to me.
<b>CORAWD—</b>		<b>CHORUS—</b>
<i>Hen Gymru'nawr i ni,</i>	6	Old Wales now to us,
<i>Hen Gymru'nawr i ni,</i>	6	Old Wales now to us,
<i>O fewn y CRYSTAL PALACE,</i>	7	Within the Crystal Palace,
<i>Hen Gymru'nawr o'n ni.</i>	6	Old Wales now were we.
<i>Os gwelir ambell Gymro</i>	7	If a few Welshmen are seen,
<i>Am wneyd ei hun yn Sais,</i>	6	Making himself an Englishman,
<i>'Nol myn'd i wlad estronol</i>	7	Going back to a foreign country,
<i>Y Saeson mawr eu trais;</i>	6	The violence of the great English;
<i>A dechreu gwadu yno</i>	7	And there began to deny,
<i>Hen Iaith y Cymru eu,</i>	6	The old language of their Wales,
<i>Ond gwaded ef a fynd</i>	7	But he denied and intended
<i>Yr hen Gymraeg i mi.</i>	6	The old Welsh to me.
<b>CORAWD— (repeated from above)</b>		

<sup>75</sup> Original located at Cardiff University Library: Special Collections and Archives (SCOLAR item no. WG35.2.2391). A recording of the ballad by Dafydd Idris Edwards is available online: <[www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv/libraries/scolar/digital/welshballads/wg3522391.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv/libraries/scolar/digital/welshballads/wg3522391.html)> [accessed 14 March 2014]. In addition to the ballad, the pamphlet also includes another anonymous poem entitled ‘Breuddwyd y Bardd’ (‘The Poet’s Dream’).

<i>Pe bawn ni wedi dysgu</i>	7	If we had not learned,
<i>Holl ieithoedd glan y llawr,</i>	6	All languages clean the floor,
<i>A gallu siarad ynddynt</i>	7	And able to speak in them,
<i>Yn gyflym ar bob awr,</i>	6	Quickly on every hour.
<i>Nis gallwn byth anghofio</i>	7	We cannot ever forget,
<i>'R iaith gyntaf ddysgais i,</i>	6	The first language that I learned,
<i>O na mwy amryl fyddai</i>	7	Oh that would be more dear,
<i>Yr hen Gymraeg i mi.</i>	6	The old Welsh to me.

CORAWD— (repeated from above)

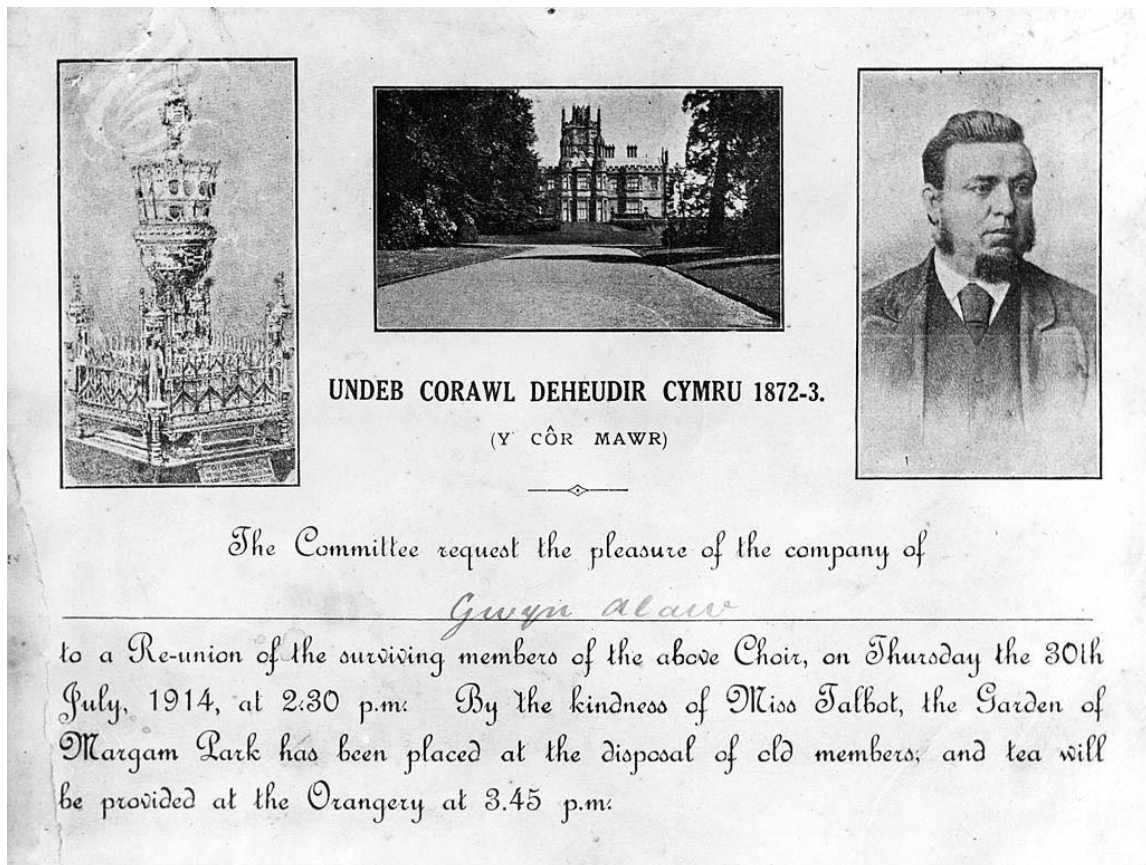
<i>Mae'r awel gref wrth dramwy,</i>	7	There's a strong breeze in the way,
<i>Drwy goedydd Gwalia gu.</i>	6	Through the woods of their Wales,
<i>A'r gornant fach risialaudd</i>	7	And the crystalline small creek,
<i>Yn dyweyd Cymraeg i mi;</i>	6	Saying Welsh to me;
<i>A'r chwim afonig fechan,</i>	7	And the agile little stream,
<i>Cymraeg yw ei chan hi,</i>	6	Welsh is her song,
<i>Wel, bellach, ninau gamwn,</i>	7	Well, now, we are singing,
<i>Yr hen Gymraeg i ni.</i>	6	The old Welsh to us.

CORAWD— (repeated from above)

While the forms of memorialisation encountered within these written poems reflect an the remembrances of individuals on the subject of Caradog and his massed choir, it is also important to consider how actions of memorialisation and commemoration were created and shared among wider collective groups. For example, how did the choir commemorate its success? And, to what extent did any acts of memorial affect community members both at the time and in later generations?

As mentioned, the choir as a whole ceased to convene following the choral competition in 1873. In reality, however, this was not entirely correct; while the choir did not meet to rehearse, a number of members met on several occasions at specially arranged reunion events. In marked contrast to the time of the competitions during the early 1870s, photographic images of these occasions have survived in the historical record. The earliest is believed to have taken place in Swansea c.1910, however the date of the event is unconfirmed. Conversely, there is no doubt about the date of the second since surviving members of the choir were formally invited to the occasion, which was held at Margam Park Orangery, near Port Talbot, on 30 July 1914 (see Plate 3.3). Of the c.450 choristers involved in the competition, there were approximately 200 in attendance on the day of the reunion (see Plate 3.4). While the invitation does not state whether

the members of the choir would be engaging in musical activity, a harp is visible on the far right hand side of the photograph. In terms of social context, it is worth noting that the First World War was beginning to erupt at this time; war was declared on Serbia by Austria-Hungary on 28 July 1914, and Great Britain announced to Germany that it would not remain neutral on 29 July 1914.



**Plate 3.3:** Invitation to South Wales Choral Union reunion at Margam Park, 1914<sup>76</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service: Digital Archive, item number 21/008 <<http://archive.rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk/treorchy>> [accessed 10 November 2013].



**Plate 3.4:** Members of the South Wales Choral Union at Margam Park, 1914<sup>77</sup>

Following the reunion at Margam Park, there does not seem to be any evidence of further reunions until 1933. In this instance, the reunion took place at Bethel Chapel, Trecynon (Aberdare) on 17 July 1933, sixty years after the Crystal Palace contest. The photograph (not reproduced here for restrictions of space) features nineteen surviving choristers, fourteen men and five women, all dressed in black.<sup>78</sup> While the reasons for the scarcity of reunions between 1914 and 1933 are unclear, the fact that these types of memorial events took place serves to highlight the cultural impact that the competition had on participating members of the choir. The Crystal Palace contests prompted a much larger ‘collective memory’ throughout the local communities in South Wales, particularly the industrial areas.

On 10 July 1920, marking precisely 47 years since the 1873 victory, a statue of Caradog was unveiled on Victoria Square, Aberdare. The statue itself consists of a stone pedestal with a bronze life-like figure of Caradog standing with both arms outstretched as if conducting with a baton in his right hand. The artwork was created by Sir William Goscombe John (1860–1952), a Cardiff-born sculptor and medallist. After working with his father Thomas John carving wood

<sup>77</sup> Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service: Digital Archive, item number 21/022 <<http://archive.rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk/treorchy>> [accessed 10 November 2013].

<sup>78</sup> Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service: Digital Archive, item number 21/018 <<http://archive.rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk/treorchy>> [accessed 10 November 2013].

for the third Marquis of Bute at Cardiff Castle, Goscombe John trained at the Cardiff School of Art, Lambeth School of Art (London), the Royal Academy and later in Paris. John's work was particularly influential as he was established as an important figure within the New Sculpture Movement (c.1877–c.1920); artists in this movement sought to create naturalistic representations of the human body, in opposition to stylised neoclassical pieces that were often made in the mid-nineteenth century. The fact that Goscombe John, a nationally and internationally recognised sculptor (he was knighted in 1911), was commissioned to produce a memorial of Caradog is highly significant.

It was not unusual for public sculptures to be utilised as a form of memorialisation. After all, all statues are inherently commemorative. However, John R. Wilson (a historian) argues that 'Victorian public sculpture is exemplary of the wider hegemonic process of the memorialisation of history [due to] the essential ceremonial aspect of the Victorian state and civil society'.<sup>79</sup> In this matter, he states that 'the revolutionising social order needed the authority and sanction of 'tradition', above all else, and in this vital sense public sculpture is to be grasped in its essence as process and ceremony'.<sup>80</sup> In short, Victorian sculptures throughout Britain tended to feature politicians or philanthropists, and were rarely linked to acts of daily life such as industrial labour.<sup>81</sup>

In contrast, Goscombe John's *Caradog* was a product commissioned by and made for the people of South Wales. The cost of the statue, £1500, was raised via public subscription.<sup>82</sup> In fact, although the statue was not revealed until 1920, reports in the press indicate that plans for the memorial had been in place for some time. An article printed in the Aberdare-based newspaper *Y Darian* (*The Shield*) on 30 January 1919 stated that detailed plans had been made in September

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<sup>79</sup> John R. Wilson, *Memorializing History: Public Sculpture in Industrial South Wales*, Research Paper 5 (Aberystwyth: The University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 1996), p.2.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> This viewpoint was shared by the critic Edmund Gosse (1849–1928) who discussed the matter in a series of articles entitled 'The Place of Sculpture in Daily Life' (1896); he promoted the idea that public sculptures should be freed from conservative tastes and a limited class clientele, instead focussing upon 'a recognised element in the life of the civilized citizen'. See Wilson, p.4.

<sup>82</sup> 'Statue of Caradog', Public Monuments and Sculpture Association, *VADS: the online resource for Visual Arts* website <<http://vads.ac.uk>> [accessed 6 March 2013].



1913, and that an agreement had been made in February 1914 for Goscombe John to create the statue.<sup>83</sup> The reason for the delay in production is attributed to the onset of World War I, after which a number of positions on the memorial committee were required to be re-elected. It is perhaps worth noting also that Caradog's son, Colonel Griffith Jones was present at the meeting held in Newport in January 1919.<sup>84</sup>



**Plate 3.5:** Unveiling of Caradog's Statue, 10 July 1920<sup>85</sup>

On the day of the unveiling, hundreds gathered at Victoria Square, despite poor weather conditions, to see Caradog's statue in situ (see Plate 3.5). The monument itself was unveiled by Lord Aberdare, and among the attendees were Caradog's widow (his third wife), his son, Sir Goscombe John and the High Constable Sir David Richard Llewellyn (1879–1940), an influential coal owner from Aberdare. The ceremony was accompanied musically by a rendition of the

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<sup>83</sup> *Y Darian*, 30 January 1914.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service: Digital Archive, item number 21/005 <<http://archive.rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk/treorchy>> [accessed 10 November 2013].

national anthem by Madame Williams-Penn from Pontypridd.<sup>86</sup> Attendees were then invited to listen to speeches by Lord Aberdare and Alderman Hopkin Morgan, CBE. In terms of cultural significance, it is clear that the event was well-attended; this is perhaps unsurprising since the inscription on the memorial reads: ‘This statue is erected by [Caradog’s] friends and countrymen in appreciation of his musical genius and as a tribute of admiration and affection’. In addition, it is evident that a number of children were present; this is therefore an example of when a collective memory of a historic event is preserved into the present and is transmitted through familial generations who were not present at the cultural moment in question. Similarly, in October 1972, a week-long festival was held in Aberdare (2<sup>nd</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> October) to mark 100 years since the South Wales Choral Union was first victorious at the Crystal Palace.

## Conclusions

1872 was a landmark year for Wales. At the inaugural National Music Meeting in Sydenham, a working-class blacksmith led a specially-formed mixed choir to ‘victory’ in the Crystal Palace. In this chapter, I argue that this event in particular (both in 1872 and 1873) contributed to the perceived identity of Wales as a ‘land of song’, thus confirming Bohlman’s assertion that choirs can be used as a powerful tool for representing the nation on stage. While it might be expected that such performances would enforce a form of national identity through language, this was not the case due to prescriptive repertoire (predominantly in English) chosen by the competition committee. Rather, as this chapter has shown, nationhood and language were tied more closely in memorialised forms of the event such as in broadside ballads and at reunion events. The inclusion of the Welsh language here (in non-competitive contexts) served to enforce a national rather than a nationalist perspective.

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<sup>86</sup> Incidentally, Goscombe John later created a sculpture entitled *Folk Song* (1931) to commemorate Evan James (1809–1878) and James James (1833–1902), the father and son who wrote the Welsh national anthem. The memorial stands in the Ynysangharad Miners’ Welfare Memorial Park in their hometown of Pontypridd. This will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

While I have argued in this chapter that Welsh participation in these choral events was both nationally supported and culturally significant, the one question remaining unanswered is: why did it matter? That is, why was an unchallenged victory in 1872 celebrated 100 years later? Trevor Herbert, a musicologist, argues that the significance of this cultural ‘moment’ was in part due to the fact that a sense of national consciousness was awakening in Wales, and this ‘had no parallel in another part of Britain’.<sup>87</sup> Together with national consciousness, however, comes the issue of how that sense of nationalism is represented both within the country but particularly outside.

Herbert states that the organisation of the South Wales Choral Union was ‘seen simultaneously as representing Wales itself’.<sup>88</sup> While there is an undoubted truth in this statement, the question still remains about why this event in particular incited such enthusiasm not only from the practitioners at the time but from future generations? An article published in the *Merthyr Telegraph* may tell the answer. It states:

We have heard of international boat-races, and the celebrated ‘All England Eleven’ cricketers went to the antipodes to compete with rivals in that part of the globe; but we never heard of a body of Welshmen leaving their mountain homes to compete with any class in any part of the world.<sup>89</sup>

For the people of Wales, therefore, the South Wales Choral Union signified not only the first representation of Wales (outside Wales) through music, but also the first representation of any kind; rugby, for example, was not introduced in Wales until the 1880s. Importantly for its working-class singers, the choir also provided an opportunity to represent a bottom-up form of national identity. As for Caradog, by leading the choir to victory he gained a privileged status within Wales. Moreover, his working-class background coupled with his passion for Western art music enabled him to inspire the first mass working-class generation at a time of social unrest and industrial expansion; he was a proletarian hero.

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<sup>87</sup> Herbert, p.271.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p.267.

<sup>89</sup> *Merthyr Telegraph and General Advertiser for the Iron Districts of South Wales*, 8 March 1872.

## Chapter Four

### Performed Masculinities: Men and Music

The central focus of this thesis is to understand the ways in which gender informed the development of the choral tradition in Wales. As the previous chapter showed, the first major display of Welsh choral singing occurred on a cross-national platform at London's Crystal Palace in 1872. For the performers, participation in this event promoted expressions of nationhood (particularly after the event) in press reports, broadside ballads and memorabilia, all produced to celebrate Wales as the 'land of song'. Moreover, collective singing itself allowed the singers to experience a sense of community and bonding through music; the success of this is signalled by a series of well-attended reunions in the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

Although Caradog's Côr Mawr encouraged both men and women to participate in choral activities, the situation had seemingly changed by the end of the nineteenth century. In 1896, Frederic Griffith, principal flautist at London's Royal Opera House, remarked that: 'Singing is the natural gift of the Welsh man; it is his amusement, his consolation at all times. There is no village, however small, but has its choir or its male voice party [...]'.<sup>2</sup> Here, Griffith cites male rather than female performers. Thus between the Crystal Palace competitions of 1872 and 1873 and the turn of the twentieth century, choral singing in Wales had developed from a mixed, unified practice to include single-sex ensembles. Using the case study of the Rhondda Glee Society, this chapter will uncover how and why male choirs became prominent by interrogating the paternalistic view of nationhood that was both created and re-inscribed through choral singing.

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<sup>1</sup> Caroline Bithell has drawn connections between notions of community and choral singing in her work on grassroots choirs in Britain today. While community (or non-auditioned) choirs have a place in the community, the choir itself forms a community with members building friendships and sharing important life moments, such as funerals and weddings. This concept is not unique to contemporary choirs, but can be applied to historical accounts of choral singing as this chapter will show. See Caroline Bithell, *A Different Voice, A Different Song: Reclaiming Community through the Natural Voice and World Song* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), p.224.

<sup>2</sup> In this case, choir is presumably a mixed gender choral society in opposition to a single-sex choir. Frederic Griffith (ed.), *Notable Welsh Musicians* (London: 1896), p.xi.

As you may recall, the study of masculinity is an interdisciplinary concern, though its emergence can be linked to the emergence of feminist criticism in literary studies of the 1970s. Feminist scholars at that time tended to assert the notion that earlier studies had focussed predominantly upon male activities in the public sphere. Such studies were problematic not only because they exclude the activities of women but also because the activities of men were presented in a way to be representative of an entire culture. It is for this reason that the appearance of masculinity studies – the study of men specifically – represented a departure from earlier academic thought. Here, the work of R. W. Connell is especially noteworthy. Connell, a trained historian but a writer of sociology, highlighted the notion that masculinity is not a fixed concept but rather something can be altered both within and between cultures. In particular, Connell suggests four categories of masculinity: dominant (or hegemonic), subordinate, complicit and oppositional (or protest). Moreover, Connell (with the support of others) was responsible for the approach entitled the New Sociology of Men, the pinnacle of which was ‘the rejection of essentialist (often biological) understandings of men’.<sup>3</sup>

As you may also remember, Ellen Koskoff importantly highlights the distinction between biological sex and gender. She argues that the former is pre-given (objective) and is related to the physical differences between the male and female body. Gender, on the other hand, is a socially constructed (subjective) phenomenon related to notions of masculinity and femininity. In this manner, it is possible for women to be masculine and men to be feminine. The biological perspective was particularly critiqued by feminist scholars who believed that such a view legitimised the masculine traits of misogyny, violence and sexual exploitation.<sup>4</sup> Nicola Dibben, a musicologist specialising in feminist perspectives in music, endorses the notion of social construction by indicating that the division of labour is not consistent in a cross-cultural

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Morrell, ‘Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies’, *Journal of South African Studies*, 24/4 (1998), p.606.

<sup>4</sup> Nicola Dibben, ‘Gender Identity and Music’, in Raymond MacDonald, David Hargreaves and Dorothy Miell (eds) *Musical Identities* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p.118.

perspective, and therefore she argues that the process of acculturation may have a greater impact on gender than biology.<sup>5</sup> Welsh male choirs were often linked to the coal and iron industries, the majority of work for which was restricted to male employees in the nineteenth century.

This chapter will largely focus upon male choirs which create exclusivity by biological difference alone; women are not permitted to participate in such choirs precisely because they are women. Traditionally, men have been engaged in singing for many centuries. In 1588, the English composer William Byrd extolled the virtues of singing: ‘Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learne [*sic*] to sing’.<sup>6</sup> However, the type of male choir that has developed in Wales, with its emphasis on music and male sociability can be linked to glee singing, a bourgeois phenomenon that developed in seventeenth-century England. This view was expressed also by Dr Joseph Parry in 1894. He noted: ‘Male part-singing has been for a long period very popular in Germany, and also in England with the old English school of male altos, tenors and basses. Now Wales is coming to the front in their male part-singing, and I may say without exaggeration that at the present time our male part singing will compare favourably with that of any country whatsoever’.<sup>7</sup> Alongside choral singing and gender, this chapter will consider how social class affected music-making. In particular, I show how glee singing was adapted from bourgeois contexts and remodelled to suit working-class audiences (in industrial contexts) and performers (such as the Rhondda Glee Society). Here, I argue that choral singing fulfilled a particular social function for men in line with the rise of industrial labour demands.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Scott D. Harrison, Graham F. Welch and Adam Adler, ‘Men, Boys and Singing’, in Scott D. Harrison, Graham F. Welch and Adam Adler (eds), *Perspectives on Males and Singing* (New York: Springer, 2012), p.3.

<sup>7</sup> This statement was part of a lengthy review, by Parry, of a concert held by the Rhondda Glee Society at the Park Hall in Cardiff. It is clear that Parry endorsed the efforts of this particular Welsh glee party in relation to male part-singing in general since he comments that the men are ‘most remarkable for their unisonal singing, sounding as with one huge voice the purity of the harmonic passages. Their deep, low-sustained notes were like those coming from a grand organ. The precision of their tempi in all their sudden accelerated or retarded passages were no less remarkable. Their dramatic intensity and fervour is also very good’. *Western Mail*, 22 March 1894.

## The Glee in England

Before examining male glee singing in Wales, it is necessary to discuss first the emergence of male glee singing in England. The term 'glee' dates back to the Anglo-Saxon period in Britain as it is derived from the Old English 'gleo' meaning mirth, and relating to music or entertainment. It was in England in the seventeenth century, however, that the term started to be utilised to indicate a specific form of musical composition; the term became more widely used for this purpose in the following century. The glee was a type of unaccompanied part-song written for three to six individual voices. According to James Richardson, earlier examples written for three male voices were usually performed with the upper line being sung by a male alto. He states also that later examples 'contained soprano parts intended for boys' or even women's voices'.<sup>8</sup> Musically, the glee is distinguishable from the homophonic texture of the traditional part-song by its use of counterpoint. Furthermore, the typical structure of a glee is in several contrasting sections, punctuated with a perfect cadence at the end of each. While some glees of the period would contain symmetrical structures in which material would be repeated, it was more common for each section to present new material 'in the manner of a free fantasia'.<sup>9</sup>

Unlike many other genres of music composition during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the glee 'owe[s] little or nothing to outside influences'.<sup>10</sup> The glee was, thus, a typically British phenomenon, and more specifically it was linked to English composers and practitioners. The first extant collection of glees was published in 1757 by William Hayes (1708–1777), a composer, organist and Professor of Music at Oxford University. In this publication, entitled *Catches, Glees and Canons*, Hayes notes in the preface:

In the following Compositions, I have endeavoured to imitate the simplicity of Style which distinguishes the Works of those Masters who are allowed to have excelled in this Species of Music; particularly those of our Countrymen [John] HILTON, [William] LAWES, [Thomas]

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<sup>8</sup> James H. Richardson, 'The English Glee', *The American Music Teacher*, 21/5 (1972), p.30.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Robins, 'The Catch and Glee in Eighteenth-Century Provincial England', in Susan Wollenberg and Simon McVeigh (eds), *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.141.

BREWER, [Thomas] FORD and others of the last Century; But above all, the famous PURCELL; whose incomparable Humour can never be outdone if equalled.<sup>11</sup>

While this preface reinforces the idea of the glee genre as a native English concept, it also serves to highlight an important feature of this form of musical composition – its humour, or, in general, its use for entertainment. Moreover, his preface states that specific communal gatherings had been arranged for the purpose of both musical performance (specifically glees and catches) and social interaction. He remarks:

Many of the former [compositions] were born under the happy Auspices of a most agreeable and well regulated Society that met weekly, and subsisted several Years, in very high Perfection, in this Place, and which I found to be productive of the desirable Effects: viz. *Chearfulness* [*sic*] and *Good-humour, Friendship* and a *Love of Harmony*; not to mention how much it contributed to the *Improvement* of the younger practitioners, enabling them to sing readily at Sight [...]<sup>12</sup>

It is unclear where Hayes is referring to when he mentions ‘in this Place’, although it is presumably somewhere in Oxford. However, this statement clearly states that specific, planned meetings were taking place throughout the 1750s.

The emergence of clubs to foster the composition and performance of glees did much to develop the glee as an art form and elevate its popularity. One of the most prolific clubs of the period was the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club, which was established in London in 1761. According to John Wall Callcott (1766–1821), an English composer (and pupil of Haydn), the principal aim of this club was ‘to encourage the efforts of rising composers’.<sup>13</sup> From 1763, this aim was achieved by presenting a number of annual prizes to worthy composers. There were four categories: a glee in a serious manner; a light-hearted glee; a catch; and a canon. Notable winners include Samuel Webbe (1740–1816) who won 17 prizes for his compositions and Callcott who was

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<sup>11</sup> William Hayes, *Catches, Glees and Canons* (Oxford: 1757). Capitals are reproduced from the source. It should be noted that a catch is closely related to the glee; a catch is a type of round for male voices often with a humorous tone. Catches were popular in England from the late sixteenth to around 1800. The distinction between the catch and the glee was not always clearly made in this period.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Italics are reproduced here from the source.

<sup>13</sup> John Wall Callcott, ‘Essays on Musical Subjects: Essay iii – On the Catch Club’ (31 August 1801), BL, Add. MS 27646, quoted in Robins, p.142.



awarded three of the four available prizes in 1785.<sup>14</sup> ‘Here in cool grot’<sup>15</sup> by Garrett Colley Wesley, the first earl of Mornington (1735–1781), an Anglo-Irish politician and composer, was named the best light glee in 1779.<sup>16</sup>

These types of prize competitions would suggest, therefore, that such meetings were held purely for educational purposes, for the development of new musical forms. However, this was not wholly true. At the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club, the musical proceedings were supplemented with the consumption of alcohol and each occasion often contained several ‘toasts’. In fact, the rules of the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club confirm the relationship present between musical and drinking practices. It states:

If any person who takes part in any piece of music [...] is found deficient in his part, and actually sings out of time or tune, or stops before the piece is finished, he is to drink a glass of wine of any sort at that time upon the table, at the requisition of any Member, and by order of the President.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, the weekly meetings of the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club took place at the Thatched House Tavern, St James’ Street from 1767 to 1814.<sup>18</sup> The venue itself provided an ideal space for sociability, drinking and collective performance not only for the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club but for a host of other organisations, including: the Literary Club; the Society of Dilettanti; the Architects’ Club (1791); the Yacht Club (1815, later the Royal Yacht Squadron); the United Service Club (1815); and the Carlton Club (1832).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> David Johnson, ‘Glee’, *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>> [accessed 8 July 2014].

<sup>15</sup> This was published by Anne Lee in Dublin, 1780. Wesley was also awarded prizes in 1776 and 1777.

<sup>16</sup> Although glees are often described as having English origins, catch and glee singing was also evident in Ireland. For example, the Hibernian Catch Club was founded in Dublin c.1680 by the lay clerks of St Patrick’s and Christ Church cathedrals; membership was restricted to lay clerks until 1770. This club, which is still flourishing, has been described as ‘the oldest musical society in Europe’ in Bertrand H. Bronson, ‘Some Aspects of Music and Literature in the Eighteenth Century’, in Earl Roy Miner (ed.), *Stuart and Georgian Moments: Papers in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p.129. Other Irish examples include the Amicable Catch Club (established in Dublin in 1765) and the Dublin Glee Club (established 1813).

<sup>17</sup> Viscount Herbert John Gladstone, *The Story of the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club* (London: privately printed, 1930), p.24.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.

<sup>19</sup> ‘St. James’s Street, West Side, Past Buildings’, Survey of London: volumes 29 and 30: St James Westminster, Part 1 (1960), pp. 459–471. Available online: <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40622>> [accessed 9 July 2014].

Despite the convivial nature suggested by this context, the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club was actually governed by a strict set of rules regarding membership, responsibilities and attendance. The founding nine members of the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club were seemingly led by John Montagu, the fourth earl of Sandwich (1718–1792).<sup>20</sup> As the name of the club suggests, additional membership was restricted to 20 members of the upper classes, which included royalty and also leading military and business figures. In addition, the club included a number of professional (or privileged) members who were musicians tasked with the duty of maintaining certain performance standards; for example, William Hayes became a privileged member in 1765. In terms of responsibilities, members were expected not only to name glees to be performed 'according to seniority', but also to participate in the performance in turns.<sup>21</sup> Attendance, too, was taken seriously with members facing expulsion for non-attendance.

As the name of the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club suggests, membership to the club was governed by another parameter: gender. Although females were permitted to participate in more general music societies at this time, catch and glee club culture throughout England was almost exclusively a male domain involving drinking, smoking and the notion of male bonding. However, the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club made a provision in 1774 to incorporate female participation into the club's activities with the introduction of specific events for ladies. That being said, women were still not permitted to attend the club on a regular basis; the newly introduced Ladies' Nights were organised on an annual basis. One of the reasons for the reluctance to involve women was linked to the obscene or risqué nature of the song texts often included in

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<sup>20</sup> In addition to John Montagu, the founding members included two other noblemen (namely Archibald Montgomery, the tenth earl of Eglington and William Douglas, the third earl of March (later fourth Duke of Queensbury)), two men who held senior rank in the army and Edmund Thomas Warren, who was a musician, businessman and antiquarian. See Brian Robins, 'The Catch Club in Eighteenth Century England', *Art Bourgogne International: Arts – Lettres* <<http://artbourgogne.free.fr/catchandglee/>> [accessed 10 July 2014].

<sup>21</sup> Richardson, p.31. In her work on making *muabet* among Prespa Albanian men, Jane Sugarman notes how music-making is structured by seniority. According to Sugarman, 'the concept of *muabet* symbolises an approach in life in which a priority is placed upon maintaining good relations with others by exchanging in constructive social interchange'. Reflecting a social order, men arrange themselves at singing gatherings according to their age; elders and other older men generally sit opposite the entrance whereas younger men are often required to sit on the floor. The social order is reflected sonically as the elders sing first. See Jane C. Sugarman, 'Making *Muabet*: The Social Basis of Singing among Prespa Albanian Men', *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology*, 7 (1987), pp.1–42 (p.8).

glee and catch compositions, which therefore deemed such pieces unsuitable to be performed in front of, or by, women. There was certainly a female interest, however, in glee performance which was provided for by the publication of collections of glees specifically for women throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; for example, the opening pages of *Apollonian Harmony*<sup>22</sup> state that the included texts are ‘consistent with female delicacy’.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the continuing censorship of female participation within glee clubs, the publication of such collections for female voices allowed women to participate outside the usual confines of club culture. However, it was not only gender boundaries that were crossed as the glee developed as an art form. In 1792, a series of vocal concerts were organised at Willis’ Rooms (formerly known as (William) Almack’s), King Street, St James’ by Samuel Harrison (1760–1812) and Charles Knyvett (1752–1822), marking a transition from semi-private, exclusive performances towards more public performances. The reason for the wording ‘more public’ here is because admittance to Willis’ Rooms was restricted by social class; for example, weekly subscription balls were held in the ballroom for those that could afford such a privilege. Likewise, an advert for the first Vocal Concert confirms that the concerts in question were for the entertainment of the upper classes. It read: ‘Mr HARRISON and Mr KNYVETT most respectfully acquaint the NOBILITY and GENTRY that their FIRST VOCAL CONCERT will commence on SATURDAY Evening next at Eight o’clock [...]’.<sup>24</sup> The series of ten concerts was run annually and by subscription for the audience members; the advert states that the tickets for individual performances were not available for purchase. In terms of repertoire, the two-act concerts principally featured glees (for example, by Webbe, Callcott, John Danby (1757–1798) and R. T. Stevens), but also included solo items and

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<sup>22</sup> Full title: *Apollonian Harmony: Collection of Scarce & Celebrated Glees, Catches, Madrigals, Canzonetts, Rounds, & Canons, Antient & Modern with some Originals Composed by Aldrich, Arne and other eminent Masters* (London: S.A. & P. Thompson, c.1795).

<sup>23</sup> Richardson, p.31.

<sup>24</sup> *Morning Herald*, 9 February 1792. Capitals are reproduced from the original source.

orchestral overtures at the start of each act. The programmes for the 1893 season list 24 vocalists (21 male, 3 female) and 19 male instrumentalists (strings, horn, oboe, bassoon and piano).<sup>25</sup>

Further to the discussion of women and glees, a gradual change in men's voices of the period also affected the trajectory of the glee's development. Earlier examples of glees often included a line to be sung by a male alto. As the number of male altos declined, however, female singers tended to form their replacement. It is for this reason that glees started to appear written for mixed voices, in particular SATB arrangements. This, coupled with the popularity of the genre in both the domestic and public sphere (via sheet music sales and concert performances respectively) and the introduction of instrumental backing in some cases, led to the adaption of the genre from contrapuntal to chordal works making the compositions less easily distinguishable from the part-song, which was particularly popular throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

It was not just the compositional forms of glees, however, that were appealing to members of Georgian (and later Victorian) societies; the notion of the glee club itself as a social entity, with its emphasis on male bonding and music, was an attractive prospect for others seeking forms of entertainment. Often using the precedent set by the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club in London, a number of clubs were established throughout provincial England in the late eighteenth century. In addition to the aforementioned club in Oxford, notable catch and/or glee clubs were set up in: Lichfield (the Lichfield Cecilian Society, established 1772); Bristol (the Bristol Catch Club, before 1774); Salisbury (before 1776); Canterbury (the Canterbury Catch Club, established 1779); Bath (the Harmonic Society of Bath, established 1784); and Chichester (established 1787). Brian Robins notes that 'the newer, fast-growing industrial conurbations of Nottingham, Liverpool and Manchester' also gave rise to catch club culture.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> 'Willis's Rooms', 1508/565, AHRC Concert Programme Database

<<http://www.concertprogrammes.org.uk/html/search/verb/GetRecord/5441>> [accessed 9 July 2014].

<sup>26</sup> Robins (2004), p.160.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.146.

While the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club provided a model, few clubs were able to emulate certain aspects of the London club; for example, few could be so selective regarding elite membership and others were less strict with musical items (some including the performance of solo and instrumental works in addition to glees and catches). In terms of membership, the Bath club shadowed the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club by considering only the 'noblemen, gentlemen and professional men' of Bath for membership, while the Canterbury club allowed its tradesmen members to pay nightly (in lieu of seasonal subscription fees).<sup>28</sup> In her study of the Messiah Club in 1760s Halifax, Rachel Cowgill notes that, although linked to the broader sense of club culture in England at this time, this club was differentiated from others by its 'members who were predominantly "poor labouring men"'.<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that despite such marked contrasts in terms of membership based on class divisions, membership to these clubs was still restricted by gender.

As noted, therefore, the notion of glee club culture was appropriated throughout the English provinces. Moreover, the glee club as a social entity was later transmitted to diasporic communities in both North America and New Zealand.<sup>30</sup> In the former, collegiate glee clubs, the majority of which maintained a male-only membership, began to emerge in the mid-nineteenth century. Self-titled as 'America's oldest college chorus', Harvard Glee Club was founded in 1858 by the president of Harvard's Pierian Sodality (established in 1808). Despite its name, the glee club differed from English precedents in that the choristers' repertoire included old European and American college and folk songs, contemporary art songs and popular operetta or show tunes, often accompanied by local bands or banjo and mandolin ensembles; performances were not restricted solely to glees (or catches).<sup>31</sup> It is therefore suggested that the inclusion of the word 'glee'

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.154.

<sup>29</sup> Rachel Cowgill, 'Disputing Choruses in 1760s Halifax: Joah Bates, William Herschel, and the Messiah Club', in Rachel Cowgill and Peter Holman (eds), *Music in the British Provinces, 1690–1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.92.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Angela Annabell, 'An Introduction to Colonial Music-Making', *Early Music New Zealand*, 2/3 (1986), pp.25–29, for a discussion of choirs and glee clubs in New Zealand in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>31</sup> 'History of the Harvard Glee Club', Harvard University webpage <<http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/hgc/about/>> [accessed 16 July 2014].

in its title refers to the concept of male bonding through music performance. Despite studies based upon glee singing in such diasporic contexts, the concept of glee singing closer to home, in Wales, remains underexplored.

### **The Glee in Wales**

In a series of two lectures presented in 1877 at the London Institution, William Alexander Barrett (1836–1891), a music critic, educator and composer of glees, exclaimed the following:

Glee music forms a splendid literature in itself. It is thoroughly English in style, manly, straightforward and vigorous, with a tenderness and pathos, which like the veins in marble take away nothing of its solidity, but adds greatly to its beauty.<sup>32</sup>

There are two aspects to this statement which will be pertinent to the following discussion: the first, the connection between glee singing and the performance of nationhood, specifically English nationhood; and the second, the fact that Barrett describes glee singing as ‘manly’. Although it has already been discussed that glee clubs were viewed predominantly as male domains, here Barrett’s equation of the music specifically with a masculine identity is also significant as it suggests that such a masculinity does not have to be created or reiterated through club culture.

It is perhaps unsurprising that little attention has been paid to glee singing as a contemporary phenomenon in Wales since, as the statement from Barrett confirms, it was viewed principally as an English performance practice. That being said, the activities of the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club in London had a link to Wales through the musical interests of George Augustus Frederick (1762–1830), the Prince of Wales and later King George IV (from 1820 to 1830). In his recollections, R. J. S. Stevens (1757–1837), an organist and composer of glees, notes a number of encounters with the Prince of Wales. Stevens was highly active within the London music scene and, in terms of club culture, he was made a professional member of the Noblemen

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Robins, ‘The Catch Club in Eighteenth Century England’, *Art Bourgogne International: Arts – Lettres* <<http://artbourgogne.free.fr/catchandglee/>> [accessed 16 July 2014].

and Gentlemen's Catch Club in 1783. Three years later, in 1786, HRH the Prince of Wales became a subscribing member of the club. Stevens recollects:

On the Eighteenth of May [1788], I was *commanded* by His Royal Highness, *The Prince of Wales*, to sing a part in the same Glee [*Stevens' O Mistress Mine*], at Hanover Square Room, for the Benefit of a Mr. Suck (a German Musician) who, poor man, had broken either his leg or his arm by an accident. His Royal Highness patronized this Benefit: but, as he could not get to the Concert Room, so soon as he had intended, he sent a Messenger to desire that *Crosdill's Concerto* on the *Violoncello*, and the Glee of *Sigh no more, Ladies*, should be postponed till he appeared in the Concert Room.<sup>33</sup>

His 'desire' for the musicians to wait for his arrival suggests that the Prince of Wales had a genuine interest in the glee as an art form that moved beyond following contemporary music fashions.

Stevens also notes other examples of the Prince's involvement in glee singing. In 1791, for example, Stevens was invited to sing at the Je ne sais quoi Club, of which the Prince of Wales was Chairman. The club's meetings were held at the Star and Garter Tavern in Pall Mall, and Stevens recalls that the Prince of Wales himself would participate occasionally in singing glees. He notes: '[...] his Royal Highness took the Base [*sic*] part of a Glee very pleasantly. He had a very fine Base voice'.<sup>34</sup>

That being said, while this discussion hints at a link between glee singing and Wales, an investigation of the practice (both musically and socially) must be examined within the country to understand fully the connection between the two. One of the earliest examples of glee singing in Wales appears to be the establishment of the Swansea Catch Club in 1805 following a period of 'desideratum' for such a 'mode of entertainment'.<sup>35</sup> Details of the club's inaugural meeting and its location, however, are unknown. Robins importantly highlights that it is often difficult to uncover information about catch clubs because, unlike the organisers of public music concerts who relied upon the local press to advertise activities, organisers of subscription clubs 'rarely needed to

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<sup>33</sup> Mark Argent (ed.), *Recollections of R.J.S. Stevens: An Organist in Georgian London* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992), p.66. Italics are reproduced.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75.

<sup>35</sup> *The Cambrian*, 13 July 1805.

advertise their regular [private] activities in the press'.<sup>36</sup> However, the Swansea-based newspaper *The Cambrian* provides some information. It states:

The third meeting, last night, afforded a most pleasant feast to the amateurs in glee singing, &c. The company is select; the suppers are excellent; and the glees, catches, duets [*sic*] &c. under the direction of Mr. Doyle, assisted by other gentlemen of taste, render this weekly meeting a most agreeable source of conviviality and harmony.<sup>37</sup>

The phrase 'gentlemen of taste' is particularly noteworthy as it indicates not only that the club was restricted to a male membership, but also suggests that such men belonged to a higher social order. Both qualities were linked inextricably to the precedent set in London.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, the use of the word 'select' reiterates the notion of exclusivity.

Further employing the London model, a ladies' night was arranged shortly after the club was established. An advert in *The Cambrian* informed its readers that the evening of entertainment would take place on 7 August 1805 at the Town-Hall, where 'a Grand Selection of GLEES, DUETS, ROTAS, SONGS, &c' will be performed, and the evening will conclude with a ball. It lists the principal performers as 'A LADY (who has kindly condescended to sing and preside at the Piano-Forte), Miss TEBAY, Mr. WEBBER, Mr. LODER, Mr. TEBAY, and Mr. DOYLE; assisted by some Gentlemen of the Society'.<sup>39</sup> Although women were therefore not permitted to attend the club on a regular basis, this type of event not only allowed them to attend but also to encounter female as well as male performers; this providing an apparent contrast to the aforementioned English examples. There were two other differences: first, refreshments, to be served only between the acts, consisted of 'tea, lemonade, orgeat [a syrup made from almonds, sugar and rose or orange water], sandwiches and negus [a drink made from wine mixed with hot water, sugar and spice]' – the entertainment was therefore not largely fuelled by the consumption of alcohol; and second, in addition to subscriber tickets, admission was also permitted to non-subscribers at the price of 5

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<sup>36</sup> Robins (2006), p.90.

<sup>37</sup> *The Cambrian*, 13 July 1805.

<sup>38</sup> Leading members included Mr J Stroud, a wealthy banker and Dr J. C. Collins. *Cambrian Daily Leader*, 23 August 1916.

<sup>39</sup> *The Cambrian*, 3 August 1805. Capitals are reproduced from the original source.



shillings, with tickets being sold at the Bush Inn and Swansea Library.<sup>40</sup> In this manner, the event became less exclusive moving from the private into the public sphere, signalled also by its advertisement in the local press.

The efforts of the Swansea Catch Club, however, appear to be short-lived. On 17 August 1805, it was reported that another ladies' night was in preparation but it seems that this event did not come to fruition. In fact, discussion of the club's activities ceased to appear in the press after these initial references in the summer of 1805. Reiterating the earlier point, it is unclear whether the club disbanded or whether its activities were not further promoted in the public eye. That being said, the fact that the Swansea Catch Club existed at all is interesting as it shows not only that this 'English' art form was appropriated in Wales but, perhaps more importantly, that people in Wales actually wanted to encounter and participate in this practice; it was a form that was emulated by choice not chance. However, this example in Swansea perpetuates the notion that glee singing was a musical practice produced by and performed largely for members of the gentry. It therefore must be wondered, why was this form of entertainment employed by members of the Welsh working class?

## **Industry and Glee**

In 1851, Charlotte Lady Guest (1812–1895) organised a 'workmen's soiree' at the Iron rooms in Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil. Upon his father's death in 1807, her husband Sir (Josiah) John Guest (1785–1852) inherited the Dowlais Ironworks which, by the 1840s, were considered to be the largest ironworks in the world; Dowlais had 18 blast furnaces (the average was just three) and a workforce of more than seven thousand.<sup>41</sup> There were three other, smaller ironworks in Merthyr: Cyfarthfa, Plymouth and Pen-y-darren. Despite their elevated social position, Charlotte and Sir John were seemingly keen to educate and entertain their working class employees beyond the usual

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Angela V. John, 'Guest, Sir (Josiah) John', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography website <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11716>> [accessed 29 July 2014].

constraints of a manager-employee relationship. Charlotte's 'workmen's soiree' involved the consumption of tea and a lecture presented by her cousin Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817–1894), an archaeologist, who discussed his interest in art, particularly sculptures from Nineveh. In her diary, Charlotte reported: 'My poor people were to have one of their intellectual feasts tonight – from 500 to 600 had been invited – all the most intelligent workmen, etc. of Dowlais [...] Stephens of Merthyr read aloud an ode he had composed in [Layard's] honour which our glee singers forthwith sang in full chorus'.<sup>42</sup>



**Plate 4.1:** 'Dowlais Ironworks from the South', by George Childs (1840)<sup>43</sup>

The glee singers mentioned were presumably members of the Dowlais Glee Club (sometimes referred to as the Dowlais Glee Party or Society).<sup>44</sup> It seems that the Guests were not

<sup>42</sup> Reproduced in John Malcolm Russell, *From Nineveh to New York: The Strange Story of the Assyrian Reliefs in the Metropolitan Museum and the Hidden Masterpiece at Canford School* (Yale University Press, 1997), p.74.

<sup>43</sup> 'Images of Industry', National Museum of Wales website <<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/industry/images>> [accessed 31 July 2014].

the only ones to support the activities of the working classes. In an account of the third instalment of the Merthyr Musical Union's Saturday Evening Concert series (held at the Temperance Hall in Merthyr Tydfil in December 1854), it was reported that 'numerous instances of the good effects of these rational entertainments [had] already been brought under the notice of the committee, and the more affluent classes [were] supporting the movement with their presence'; it is also noted that a number of the 'lady patronesses' were expected to be present at the next event.<sup>45</sup> At the concert, the Dowlais Glee Club performed several madrigals and glees, including the earl of Mornington's 'Here in cool grot'.

The Dowlais Glee Club was also engaged at other concerts for the benefit of community causes. In April 1856, a concert was held at the Temperance Hall for the purpose of settling expenses incurred in organising such Saturday evening concerts. In particular, Handel's *Messiah* is highlighted with an explanation that its performance was 'undertaken with the laudable purpose of elevating and stimulating the musical taste possessed in an eminent degree by the working classes of this district'.<sup>46</sup> Interestingly another newspaper reported on the same day that the debt was incurred by a Mozart concert, but the important point to note here is that musical activities were being utilised as a form of enhancing the working classes.<sup>47</sup> Performers at the benefit concert included the Dowlais Glee Club (20–30 members), the Dowlais Temperance Choir (50–60 members) and the Cyfarthfa Band. The following glees were performed: 'Who shall win my Lady Fair' – Robert Lucas Pearsall; 'Gallant and Gaily' – William Horsley; 'Blow, blow, thou Winter Wind' – R.J.S. Stevens, arr. Callcott; and, 'Swiftly from the Mountain's Brow' – Webbe. The concert raised sufficient funds to clear the debt, and the surplus raised was earmarked to establish a

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<sup>44</sup> In October 1850, a similar event was hosted by Lady Charlotte and Sir John at the Dowlais Iron Rooms. Their guests included 'agents and clerks, and their wives, about 200 of the workmen, and the tradesmen's daughters', with musical entertainment provided by members of the Dowlais Glee Club and accompanied on Charlotte's piano (accompanist not known). *Welshman*, 18 October 1850.

<sup>45</sup> *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 22 December 1854.

<sup>46</sup> *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 12 April 1856.

<sup>47</sup> *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 12 April 1856.

Free Reading Room.<sup>48</sup> In August of the same year, a concert was held by the Dowlais Band and the Dowlais Glee Club at the New Schools to raise funds for the families affected by an accident at the Cymmer Colliery.

It is worth noting more about the Cyfarthfa Band. The band was established in 1838 by Robert Thompson Crawshay of Cyfarthfa Castle. As a family the Crawshays were veritable iron barons, with Robert's father W.T. Crawshay owning the Cyfarthfa Ironworks in Merthyr Tydfil. The Band earned both a local and a national reputation; it won the second day of the first brass band contest to be held at the Crystal Palace Championships in 1860. That being said, such competitive appearances were rare since Robert Crawshay 'never regarded [the Band], or allowed it be regarded, as anything other than his own personal property'.<sup>49</sup> The focus for Crawshay was quality musicianship and excellence. The players of the Band, therefore, could be divided into two categories: the first, local musicians with sufficient expertise; and the second, imported or 'headhunted' players from travelling circus shows, London theatres or professional orchestral positions, each enticed by the prospect of remuneration (albeit small) and housing. Trevor Herbert notes that the players 'were almost certainly given jobs in the iron works and some financial retainers for playing'.<sup>50</sup> George d'Artney seemingly moved from France to Merthyr to provide arrangements and transcriptions for the band.

It is this point precisely that distinguishes this band from the aforementioned Dowlais Glee Club and a number of other musical groups (both vocal and instrumental) in the mid-nineteenth century. The Cyfarthfa Band reflects a top-down, rather than a bottom-up, trajectory (in comparison with the South Wales Choral Union); it was formed precisely for the entertainment for the Crawshays who occupied an elevated social class in opposition to the workers in their ironworks. This is in marked contrast to Charlotte and Sir John Guest who were involved in efforts

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Trevor Herbert and Arnold Myers, 'Instruments of the Cyfarthfa Band', *The Galpin Society Journal*, 41 (1988), p.3.

<sup>50</sup> Trevor Herbert, 'The Repertory of a Victorian Provincial Brass Band', *Popular Music*, 9/1 (1990), p.118.

to engage their workers in art and music. Moreover, the Cyfarthfa Band was only to play at the request and permission of Robert Crawshay. In this manner, this type of music making can be viewed more as a commodity for the upper classes rather than a participatory practice for the working classes. By contrast, the following section will examine the Rhondda Glee Society, a working-class ensemble that gained both a national and an international reputation.

### **The Rhondda Glee Society**

The Rhondda Glee Society, conducted by Tom Stephens (1856–1906), was formed in the late 1870s.<sup>51</sup> Choral music, in general, began earnestly in the Rhondda Valleys shortly after the despatch of the first train load of steam coal from the Bute Colliery, Treherbert to Cardiff in December 1855. While the exploitation of coal as a commercial product differed from the output of other South Wales areas, such as Merthyr's iron trade, it too required a vast workforce which prompted migration predominantly of young males into the industrial area. A vast proportion of such migrants came from within Wales; some Welsh-speaking nonconformists came from rural West Wales while others came from the neighbouring Taf (Merthyr) and Cynon (Aberdare) valleys where industrial practices were already well established.<sup>52</sup> To illustrate the extent of the demographic explosion in the Rhondda Valleys, the population rose from 951 in 1851 to 16,914 twenty years later in 1871.<sup>53</sup>

One migrant to the area was Tom Stephens. Although born in Brynamman in Carmarthenshire, West Wales, Stephens moved at a young age to the musically-active area of Aberdare. He was educated at Mill Street (Ysgol y Comin) school by Dan Issac Davies (1839–1887), a schoolmaster who gained a reputation for the promotion of the Welsh language within the school setting. In addition to nurturing Stephens' native language skills, Davies also recognised that

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<sup>51</sup> The precise date of the choir's formation is unclear as some sources list 1877 and others state 1878. On 15 April 1899, the *Cardiff Times* reported celebrations, including a banquet and a presentation of medals, to mark the choir's twenty-first anniversary which would suggest that 1878 was actually the year that the choir was formed.

<sup>52</sup> Williams, p.119.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Stephens had a musical talent. It is perhaps not surprising, due to their geographical proximity, that the musical education of Stephens was influenced by Caradog. In fact, the two were linked inextricably since Stephens performed as a boy alto in Caradog's Côr Mawr, competing at the Crystal Palace in both 1872 and 1873. In addition, there was another link in terms of employment since Stephens too was also involved in the brewery trade as he was the landlord of the Blacksmith's Arms in the Rhondda village of Treherbert.

Stephens was also a member of the Aberdare Choral Union, led by Caradog. Upon Caradog's departure to Treorchy, however, the role of conductor was taken by Rees Evans (1835–1916), who appointed Stephens as sub-conductor. Evans, too, was a native of West Wales (from Ammanford), yet he made a living as both a tailor and a precentor in Aberdare from 1860. Although the notion of competitive culture (particularly in association with musical practices) was established in Wales by the 1870s, Evans was averse to the idea. Responding to criticism in the English press that competitions such as the *eisteddfod* allowed Welsh choirs to master single choruses instead of whole works, Evans arranged a series of annual oratorio concerts in Aberdare from 1874.<sup>54</sup> Such concerts exposed Aberdare audiences to repertoire by Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Mendelssohn, as well as less familiar works by others including the Welsh composer Joseph Parry (1841–1903). In addition to the local choir, the concerts featured soloists with national reputations, and thus the boundaries between amateurism and professionalism were blurred. In fact, a report of the thirteenth oratorio concert (Handel's *Jephtha*) published in the *Aberdare Times* reminded its readers that 'the members of the choir belong chiefly to the working class, [they] derive no pecuniary benefit from the performances with the exception occasionally of a few shillings each divided among them'.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Williams., p.54.

<sup>55</sup> There is also a link here between industrial action and musical performance since the 20-piece orchestra, led by Mr T. Carrington played the 'Dead March' in honour of the 81 men who had died as a result of a disaster at Mardy Colliery in December 1885. It is also noted that the attendance at the concert was less than usual due to the disaster. *Aberdare Times*, 2 January 1886.

It is clear, therefore, that Stephens was involved with working class musical practices from a young age. In this matter the Rhondda Glee Society, with its membership made up almost exclusively of colliers, was no different. However, there is one important distinction to be made between the Côr Mawr and the Aberdare Choral Union, and the Rhondda Glee Society, namely gender; while the first two ensembles afforded both men and women the opportunity to participate, the Rhondda Glee Society allowed only men. It is worth noting that despite the ambiguity of gender in the choir's title (in opposition to 'male voice choir'), the notion of male glee clubs was known and had been emulated in Wales by this time (as the case of the Swansea club highlighted). This segregation from an inclusive to an exclusive membership in choral performance would significantly shape the way choral singing was viewed in Wales in later decades. It was in the 1870s that male choral singing came to the fore in general in Wales. Moreover, it is the Rhondda Glee Society in particular that is often attributed to this rise in male choirs; Gareth Williams notes that Tom Stephens '[brought] Rhondda male choralism to the attention of a world that knew of the valley's steam coal but little else'.<sup>56</sup> But what was it about this group of singing colliers that commanded so much attention? How did a choir from the Rhondda Valleys gain an international reputation? And, to what extent was its efforts supported at a local level?

The Rhondda Glee Society was a competing choir. Its first large-scale success occurred at the National Eisteddfod in Cardiff in 1883, when the choir won the first prize in the category for male choirs (there were seventeen competing choirs in total).<sup>57</sup> In the following years, the choir continued to compete and it secured wins at smaller-scale *eisteddfodau* in Merthyr in 1884 (prize: £20; test piece: Parry's 'Monk's March') and in Bridgend in 1887 (prize: £10; test piece: David Jenkins' 'Valiant Warriors' from the dramatic cantata *David and Goliath*). At the latter, the earl of Dunraven was present and commented that 'the *eisteddfod* had shown the Welsh people to be

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<sup>56</sup> Williams, p.123.

<sup>57</sup> This was also the year that the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire (now Cardiff University) was founded.

essentially a musical people [...] music and poetry flowed direct from the hearts of [them]’.<sup>58</sup>

However, it was in August of the same year (1887) that the Rhondda Glee Society became further recognised on a national scale with their involvement at the National Eisteddfod which was held for the first time in London, at the Royal Albert Hall.<sup>59</sup>

According to the official transactions of the *eisteddfod*, not all of the competitions were open to non-Welsh competitors despite the location of the event in England. There were only two categories marked ‘open to all comers’, namely the Choral Competition for Male Voices (50–70 members) and the Chief Choral competition (200–250 members).<sup>60</sup> In the former category, eleven choirs competed for a £50 prize and a gold medal for their conductor. Despite being an ‘open’ category, only two of the competing choirs were based outside of Wales, namely the Huddersfield Glee and Madrigal Society (conducted by John North) and the London Welsh (conducted by J. Haydn Parry, son of the Welsh composer Dr Joseph Parry).<sup>61</sup> The male choirs were tested with Arthur Sullivan’s ‘The Beleaguered’ – an ‘exceedingly fine glee’ – as well as ‘Where is He?’ from Beethoven’s oratorio *The Mount of Olives* and ‘Valiant Warriors’ (the same test piece used at the Bridgend Eisteddfod) by David Jenkins, who was also one of the adjudicators.<sup>62</sup> It seems the competition was close between the North Walian Arvonian Choir (conducted by Dr Roland Rogers) and the glee societies from Huddersfield and the Rhondda, but as Rogers conducted Sullivan’s glee slower than the composer’s suggested tempo the first prize was awarded jointly to the other two choirs. The reaction in the press is mixed with reporters seeking to validate the success of the Huddersfield male choir; the *North Wales Chronicle* reported that ‘in the opinion not only of the friends of the [Huddersfield choir], but of a good many “Taffies” who heard the singing, the

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<sup>58</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 25 June 1887.

<sup>59</sup> The National Eisteddfod was also held at the Royal Albert Hall in 1909.

<sup>60</sup> Eisteddfod Transactions, Caerludd, 1887

<<https://archive.org/stream/eisteddfodgenhed00eistuoft#page/n52/mode/1up>> [accessed 18 August 2014].

<sup>61</sup> John North, a well-known musical figure in Yorkshire, was also the conductor for the Huddersfield Choral Society which was to compete in the Chief Choral competition. North was also the conductor of the Huddersfield Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as for the Holmfirth and Keighley Choral Societies.

<sup>62</sup> ‘The Huddersfield Choirs and the Welsh Eisteddfod’, *The Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser*, 6 August 1887.



Huddersfield people fairly earned the first prize'.<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, the report published in *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* believed that the performance of the Arvonian Choir was superior to that of the Rhondda Gleemen, noting that the 'attack and declamation' of the latter lacked the 'refinement and culture' of the former.<sup>64</sup> However, the success of the Rhondda Glee Society at another national *eisteddfod* helped to secure its reputation as a leading male choir.

Such a reputation was exploited the following year when the choir visited America for the first time, making them 'one of the earliest parties to tour the USA'.<sup>65</sup> The venture was extensive with the choir spending six months (September 1888 to April 1889) travelling and performing a staggering 140 concerts within that timeframe. However, it is unclear how arrangements were made regarding the employment status of the choir's collier members. Despite the success of the choir's first American tour, it left the choir suffering financially. One of the strategies to combat the deficiency was to enter a number of choral competitions in a bid to win monetary prizes – a feat that was largely successful with the choir securing 15 wins (and three defeats) in the two years after their return. One of the defeats was at the 1891 National Eisteddfod held in Swansea, for which the test pieces were Laurent de Rille's 'The Destruction of Gaza' (technically demanding with its eight-part harmony) and 'The Pilgrims' by Joseph Parry. Here, Stephens and his choir failed to receive either of the first or second prizes (awarded to the Pontycymmer Glee Society and the Treorky<sup>66</sup> Male Society respectively), a fact which prompted the local press to ask: 'how long do the Rhondda choirs intend to be in this state of disorganisation and let the honours go elsewhere?'.<sup>67</sup>

This particular defeat was noteworthy since a bitter rivalry had developed between the Rhondda Glee Society and the Treorchy Male Society (also based in the Rhondda), which was formed in 1883 and conducted by William Thomas (b.1851) from 1885. There were similarities

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<sup>63</sup> *North Wales Chronicle*, 20 August 1887. A further intersection between the Huddersfield Glee Society and Welsh culture occurred in 1888 when the choir performed a concert at the Albert Hall in Swansea. See *Cardiff Times*, 21 April 1888.

<sup>64</sup> *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 10 August 1887.

<sup>65</sup> NLW: RS1/2, John Haydn Davies Papers.

<sup>66</sup> This is an early spelling of the area, it is now known as Treorchy which will be used hereafter.

<sup>67</sup> *Pontypridd Chronicle and Workman's News*, 28 August 1891.

between the two conductors as Thomas not only sang in Caradog's Côr Mawr but was also a precentor at Noddfa Baptist Chapel (Stephens was a precentor at Bethesda). In addition, there is a working class connection since the members of Thomas' choir were employed at the Ocean Collieries in Treorchy. Despite such links, however, the rivalry between the two choirs was engrained enough to last for twenty years. One occasion where this opposition came to the fore was at the 1893 National Eisteddfod held at Pontypridd. The test pieces were 'The War Horse' by David Jenkins and 'The Tyrol' by the French *Orphéoniste* composer Ambroise Thomas (1811–1896). It is worth noting that the choice of *eisteddfod* test pieces, in general, was criticised by Harry Evans (1873–1914) who believed that such pieces were 'selected from a commercial standpoint and not from an artistic and progressive value'.<sup>68</sup> While there may have been some truth in his statement, it would seem that the test pieces tended also to follow contemporary metropolitan tastes; 'The Tyrol', for example, was published in *The Apollo Club Series* in London in 1881.<sup>69</sup> Despite the description of the Treorchy choir's performance as 'admirably crisp [...] with excellent balance of tone', the choir was awarded the second prize of £15.<sup>70</sup> The victory for the Rhondda Glee Society (first prize, £50) was reportedly due to its rendition of 'The Tyrol', for which the choir had received information about the yodelling techniques utilised in the Tyrolean Mountains from a brewery traveller who had been there.<sup>71</sup>

In several sources related to this eisteddfod in Pontypridd, it is stated that it was decided that the winner of the Male Voice Competition would represent Wales at the World's Fair held in Chicago in September 1893. However, this appears to be incorrect. While the Rhondda Glee Society did travel to America for this purpose, it seems that the venture was being planned months before the National Eisteddfod, which was held in August 1893. In fact, it was reported in March

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<sup>68</sup> See Harry Evans, 'Welsh Choral Singing', in T. Stephens (ed.), *Wales: To-Day and To-Morrow* (Cardiff: *Western Mail*, 1907), p.324.

<sup>69</sup> Ambroise Thomas, 'The Tyrol', in *The Apollo Club: A Collection of Men's Choruses and Part Songs for Men's Voices* (London: J. Curwen & Sons, [1881]).

<sup>70</sup> *Weekly Mail*, 12 August 1893.

<sup>71</sup> *Excelsior: The Voice of the Treorchy Male Choir* (1993) <<http://www.treorchymalechoir.org/archives/EXCELSIOR>> [accessed 19 August 2014].

that Lord Bute had donated £50 to the choir for their intended visit to Chicago.<sup>72</sup> In August, however, Stephens reported that the choir would not be able to attend unless the £300 deficient in the choir's fund (£500 already raised) could be eradicated, and it was stated that the choir was 'confident of winning the first prize'.<sup>73</sup> In addition to transportation costs, the official rules for the Chicago Eisteddfod stated that each member of a competing choir was to send 'ONE DOLLAR (FIVE SHILLINGS) as proof of good faith', which would be returned to the competitors after their performances.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the deadline for this deposit was 1 August 1893 which further proves that the Rhondda Glee Society would have had to enter before competing at the Pontypridd Eisteddfod.

In addition to concerns over money, the choir's preparations were also disrupted by a 16-week long hauliers' strike which erupted over opposition to the establishment of the Sliding Scale, a system which regulated wages across the industry, based on the selling price of coal. Although this was principally a strike by the hauliers, without them the colliers were unable to continue working since the role of the hauliers was to transport the coal that had been mined. During this time, 1,000 soldiers were sent to occupy the coalfields and bring to order the violent fighting that was taking place in the Rhondda and northern Monmouthshire. The Rhondda choristers were directly affected. John Haydn Davies (1905–1991), life member and conductor of the Treorchy Male Choir from 1946 to 1969, reported that 'most [members] of the choir were out of work. In Treherbert, the Tydraw mine had gone bankrupt and the workmen had not received their wages, their families were destitute and without food'.<sup>75</sup> Stephens, however, used the strike to increase the numbers of rehearsals (held twice daily at 2.30pm and 7.30pm) in anticipation of the international

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<sup>72</sup> *Evening Express*, 14 March 1893.

<sup>73</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 19 August 1893.

<sup>74</sup> BL: MS 15610/2596, *Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Ffair y Byd. Medi 5ed, 6ed, 7ed, 8ed, 1893* (Chicago: Cambro Printing Co., 1892). Capital letters are reproduced from the original source.

<sup>75</sup> NLW: RS1/2, John Haydn Davies Papers.

competition. In this way, he was able to show how choral music operated as a medium for upholding communal solidarity during a significant moment of industrial disruption.<sup>76</sup>

The test pieces for the Chicago Eisteddfod were ‘The Pilgrims’ by Joseph Parry, a piece familiar to the Rhondda Gleemen since it was the test piece at the 1891 National Eisteddfod in Swansea, and ‘Cambria’s Song of Freedom’ by T. J. Davies. The title of the latter piece, Cambria being the Latin for Wales, is apt for its composer who received his musical training in Wales and later moved to America.<sup>77</sup> There were nine competing choirs in the contest for male choirs (of fifty to sixty voices) – six from America (all connected to Wales), two from Wales and one from England – which was to be adjudicated by John Thomas (‘Pencerdd Gwalia’), William. L. Tomlins (Chicago) and Dr John H. Glover (Denver). The choirs competed in the following order:

1. Cambrian Male Chorus (Pittsburgh, PA). Director – D. E. Davies
2. Scrantonians (Scranton, PA). Director – [not given]
3. Wilkesbarre Male Choir (Wilkesbarre, PA). Director – John Lloyd Evans
4. Penrhyn Male Choir (North Wales). Director – Edward Broome
5. Tabernacle Male Choir (Salt Lake City). Director – Evan Stephens
6. Birkenhead Male Choir (Birkenhead, England). Director – O. H. Parry
7. Gwent Glee Society (Edwardsville, PA). Director – Tom Griffiths
8. Rhondda Glee Society (South Wales). Director – Tom Stephens
9. Iowa World’s Fair Male Party (Hiteman, IA). Director – W. B. Powell<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Chicago was also the site of several strikes prior to, but not related to, the Chicago Eisteddfod. The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 resulted in violent episodes between the workers and the industrial leaders (known also as robber barons). In 1886, more violence ensued as part of a campaign to improve working conditions and introduce an eight-hour working day pattern; this is now referred to as the Haymarket Affair. In the context of such labour activism, ‘*gwel oedd peidio cysylltu Côr Meibion y Rhondda â streicio*’ (English, ‘it was better not to affiliate the Rhondda Male Choir with striking’). Hywel Teifi Edwards, *Eisteddfod Ffair y Byd, Chicago 1893* (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1990), p.140.

<sup>77</sup> Davies’ ‘Song of Freedom’ was published in the *American Musical Times*, 1/8 (1891).

<sup>78</sup> BL: MS 15610/2596, *Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Ffair y Byd. Medi 5ed, 6ed, 7ed, 8ed, 1893* (Chicago: Cambro Printing Co., 1892).

According to Williams, the choirs from Wales were ‘clearly the two best choirs’.<sup>79</sup> In fact, all contests which had competitors from Wales were won by the Welsh. In this case, therefore, the prize was between the Rhondda and Penrhyn choirs but, due to an unfortunate incident involving a gust of wind and the sheet music for the Penrhyn accompanist, the first prize of \$1000 (donated by Evan Lloyd, Esq. Chicago) was awarded to the Rhondda Glee Society. The Penrhyn Male Choir took the second prize of \$500.

Following its newly acquired honour and its previous success in America, the choir remained in the USA in order to tour. In total, Stephens and his choir performed 15 concerts within a period of six weeks after the Chicago Eisteddfod. Press accounts in Wales continued to comment upon the choir’s activities post-*eisteddfod*, however, it was reported in October 1893 that some members of the choir would have to return early to Wales due to financial constraints.<sup>80</sup> This was despite the fact that the choir had earned some remuneration and that Stephens had stated that the concerts were ‘brilliantly successful’.<sup>81</sup> Stephens and the remainder of the party returned in November, although five members of the choir (John Evans, John Rees, Thomas Pearce, James Williams and David Wilks) remained indefinitely in the USA.

The celebrations in Wales, particularly South Wales, took place in the same manner as those for the return of Caradog’s choir twenty years previously with crowds of people gathered at several of the rail stations. At Pontypridd, several distinguished members of the community had appeared to witness the homecoming of Stephens and his choir, including David Leyshon (chairman of the Pontypridd Local Board), Joseph David (honorary secretary of the Pontypridd National Eisteddfod) and Caradog himself. Here, the choir was greeted with ‘ringing cheers that

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<sup>79</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.125.

<sup>80</sup> *Evening Express*, 24 October 1893.

<sup>81</sup> *Evening Express*, 14 November 1893.

were given again and again'.<sup>82</sup> At Pentre, locals had erected a giant banner with the words 'Welcome to the Champion Conductor'. The scene at Ystrad, Rhondda, was animated with 'thousands of friends carrying flags and bannerets, while two brass bands – the Pentre Rifle Band, led by Mr. Blamey, and the Gelli Band, under the leadership of Mr. Harry Evans – played 'See the Conquering Hero Comes' [...] Mr. Stephens, as soon as he alighted, was hoisted on the shoulders of the crowd and carried in triumph'.<sup>83</sup>

The link between the achievements of Caradog's choir and Stephens' choir is important. While the notion of Wales as a 'land of song' was beginning to emerge with the success of the Côr Mawr in 1872 and 1873, the same terms were used in connection with the Rhondda Glee Society; a letter addressed to Stephens stated that the people of Wales owed Stephens for 'sustaining the "Land of Song" in its right position in the world of music'.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, 'Eos Penylan' suggested that the Rhondda male choristers should be honoured with medals in the same manner as those from Caradog's choir.<sup>85</sup> While this commemorative gesture did not occur until the choir's twenty-first anniversary in 1899 when medals were provided for the choir by Mrs Llewellyn of Baglan Hall, the equation of the accomplishments of the two choirs is particularly significant considering the differences between the two both in terms of size and gender. Interestingly, the fact that the choir was all-male (as opposed to mixed) is not highlighted in the press. In addition to the connections mentioned, there was a personal association between Caradog and Stephens' choir since Caradog was not only present in Chicago to witness the contest, but also at Pontypridd Station to welcome the party home.

It is perhaps surprising that following its win at the Chicago Eisteddfod the choir decided to refrain from competing at further *eisteddfodau*, opting instead to perform largely for the purpose of charitable causes (raising approximately £2500). On 23 February 1898, however, the choir

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<sup>82</sup> *Evening Express*, 25 November 1893.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Evening Express*, 6 December 1893.

<sup>85</sup> *Evening Express*, 24 October 1893.

performed for a different reason; they were invited to sing at Windsor Castle for Queen Victoria who, in turn, allowed the choir the privilege of henceforth using the word ‘Royal’ in its title. The Rhondda Glee Society was not the first male choir of its kind to be given this opportunity since its rivals, the Treorchy Male Choir, performed for the Queen at Windsor three years earlier on 29 November 1895. Although both choirs belonged to the same social class, there were marked differences in the way they were perceived. The choristers of the Rhondda Glee Society opted to wear tailcoats and white gloves (as shown in Plate 4.2), a dress which promotes a visual representation of an ensemble belonging to an elevated social class, and one linked to the aristocratic nature of glee singing in general. Upon hearing the choir, the Queen was suitably impressed and asked Stephens if the members were all professionals. He replied: ‘No, your majesty [...] three fourths of the choir are colliers. We have but 1 professional amongst us – Mr D.J. – and even he, your majesty, has been brought up in the mines and worked underground until the last 2 or 3 years when he won a scholarship and entered the academy’.<sup>86</sup> When the Treorchy choir performed in their mismatched Sunday best, however, the queen inquired if they were all miners.<sup>87</sup> In this manner, sartorial codes were utilised in a way that allowed a working class ensemble to perform in a bourgeois manner.

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<sup>86</sup> NLW: RS1/2, John Haydn Davies Papers.

<sup>87</sup> *Evening Express*, 30 November 1895. However, it has been suggested that the poorest members of societies were excluded from participating in choral activities due to sartorial expectations; ‘the possession of smart clothes was an essential prerequisite for participation in most choirs, and observers were quick to applaud the dress sense of many singers’. See Andy Croll, ‘Conducting Social Relations: The Civic Discourse, Crowds and Popular Music’, in *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture and Public Space in Merthyr, c.1870–1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), p.128. There is no evidence to suggest that this was the case for either the Treorchy Male Choir or the Rhondda Glee Society. It was noted with reference to the former, however, that they wore their mismatched Sunday best – ‘the clothes in which the best class of Welsh workmen generally wear’ – with a black tie to provide some form of uniformity.



**Plate 4.2:** The Rhondda Glee Society, 1898<sup>88</sup>

The idea of the Rhondda Glee Society as a musical representative of a bourgeois culture was further highlighted by a number of the choir's other post-Chicago appearances. In 1894, the choir was invited to visit Ash Hall (Ystradowen, Vale of Glamorgan), a mansion owned by Daniel Owen who had earned his fortune in the Australian timber trade before returning to Wales and later becoming joint proprietor of the *Western Mail*. Despite the obvious differences in social class between the choir and its host, Owen was keen that the members of the choir were not in attendance solely to perform. In addition to singing, they drank beer and wine, went 'nutting' (collecting nuts in the Trenches Wood), took part in a worship ceremony at the 'Mound of Peace' and enjoyed a lavish dinner.<sup>89</sup> While the class boundaries seem to have been blurred in this instance (the traditional distinction between performers and 'audience' altered), the same could not be said for the choir's appearance at Eaton Hall in Cheshire.

<sup>88</sup> St Fagans National History Museum: 35/33, 343.

<sup>89</sup> *Evening Express*, 13 September 1894.



The Duke and Duchess of Westminster became acquainted with the Rhondda Glee Society due to a performance by the choir at Chester Music Hall in 1898, for which the Duke and Duchess were present.<sup>90</sup> Impressed by the Welsh choristers, they invited the choir to perform at an ‘aristocratic house party’ held at their residence of Eaton Hall in January 1899.<sup>91</sup> In addition to their hosts, the audience was firmly aristocratic with the following guests also in attendance: Prince Francis of Teck, Prince Alexander of Teck, the Marquis and Marchioness of Ormonde, Ladies Constance and Beatrice Butler, Earl and Countess Grey, the Earl of Shaftsbury, Lord and Lady Catlerosse, Lord Rowton, Viscountess Cobham and Lady Kathleen Cole, amongst others.<sup>92</sup> While its motives for doing so were unclear, the choir performed the same programme that they had presented to Queen Victoria the previous year. Here, the repertoire included items with royal affiliations (‘God Save the Queen’ and ‘God Bless the Prince of Wales’, in English and in Welsh respectively), *eisteddfod* test pieces (for example, ‘The Tyrol’ and ‘The Pilgrims’) and several choruses (for example, ‘Night and Day’ and ‘Men of Harlech’, the latter in Welsh).

Later the same year, the choir cemented its reputation with a number of commercial recordings made at Barry’s Hotel on St Mary’s Street in Cardiff. The recordings, which appeared in the 1899 Gramophone catalogue, were made by Fred Gaisberg (1873–1951) who had joined Gramophone as a recording engineer in 1898. While the Welsh section of the catalogue included solo items from a male and two female singers (namely Mr H. Miller, Miss Breeze and Miss Eleanor Jones), the choral music of Wales was represented solely by the all-male Rhondda Glee Society. In fact, the catalogue states that ‘Welsh glee singers are the best known in the world’.<sup>93</sup> This notion of the glee singers as worthy performers was highlighted in Gaisberg’s diary. He comments: ‘The members of the Rhondda Glee Choir are hardy colliers from the coal districts. All

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<sup>90</sup> While it seems appearances for the choir at music halls was not a regular occurrence, the choir also performed at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester (29 October 1898 and 18 February 1899) as part of a series of popular concerts organised by J. A. Cross. Bannister Scrapbook Collection 2 (1888–1899), AHRC Concert Programmes Database <<http://www.concertprogrammes.org.uk>> [accessed 1 August 2014].

<sup>91</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 14 January 1899.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Gramophone Record Catalogue (1899), BL website <<http://sounds.bl.uk>> [accessed 20 August 2014].

are swarthy and of a small frame, but they take an absorbing interest in their music. They sing with great precision and show good drilling'.<sup>94</sup> While there may be a desire to represent each nation favourably in the official catalogue, Gaisberg is unafraid to provide genuine impressions of his musical encounters in his diary. For example, on 6 September 1899 (24 days prior to the Cardiff recordings), Gaisberg was recording male voices in Glasgow about which he commented: 'very poor artists. [...] Scotch songs and music are good, characteristic and original, but its singers are poor, lacking quality and evenness of tone'.<sup>95</sup> His endorsement of the Welsh singers is, therefore, significant.<sup>96</sup>

The choice of repertoire for the choir, with its emphasis on the Welsh language, is perhaps unexpected. Utilising the time and effort made towards preparing for *eisteddfod* competitions, the choir often performed *eisteddfod* test pieces in the context of non-competitive events and concerts. Such test pieces were often in the English language since, in addition to the idea of following metropolitan tastes, the *eisteddfod* itself was highly anglicised in the late nineteenth century. It is therefore surprising that the Rhondda Glee Society has shunned links to the cultural form of the *eisteddfod* (with the exception of Ambrose Thomas' 'The Tyrol') in favour of musical items in their native language. It is known, however, that Stephens was a Welsh speaker and at the aforementioned ceremony on the 'Mound of Peace' the speaking of English was not allowed (an indicator that all choristers were able to understand, if not speak, Welsh). The following figure shows the items recorded by Gaisberg:

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<sup>94</sup> Hugo Strötbaum (ed.), *The Fred Gaisberg Diaries Part 1: USA & Europe (1898–1902)*

<[http://www.recordingpioneers.com/docs/GAISBERG\\_DIARIES\\_1.pdf](http://www.recordingpioneers.com/docs/GAISBERG_DIARIES_1.pdf)> [accessed 21 August 2014].

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Gaisberg's diary also notes remuneration figures for the choir (£10), the director (Stephens) and accompanist (£2 – 2s) and rail transportation for the choir (£1 – 11 – 5).

Catalogue number	Title
4508:	‘Ymdaith Gwŷr Harlech’ (‘March of the Men of Harlech’)
4509:	‘Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau’ (‘Land of My Fathers’)
4510:	‘Yr Hâf’ (‘The Summer’)
4511:	‘Bydd Myrdd o Ryfeddodau’ (hymn, ‘There’ll be a Myriad of Wonders’)
4512:	‘Annabelle Lee’ (Joseph Parry)
4513:	‘The Tyrol’ (Ambrose Thomas)
4514:	‘Codwn Hwyl’
4515:	‘O Fryniau Caersalem’ (hymn, ‘From Jerusalem’s Hills’)
4516:	‘Soldiers’ Chorus’(from Gounod’s <i>Faust</i> )

**Figure 4.1:** Rhondda Glee Society Recordings in the Gramophone Record Catalogue, 1899<sup>97</sup>

It is interesting to note also that several of the items listed here are linked with a sense of masculinity in their titles alone, notably numbers 4508, 4509 and 4516. Moreover, each of the aforementioned test pieces ‘Valiant Warriors’, ‘The War Horse’ and ‘The Destruction of Gaza’ promote images of war and protest, both of which are associated largely with masculine practices. Such dynamic imagery was seen to be a feature of Welsh male choralism; commenting upon the ‘picturesque’ music utilised by male choirs, an English critic remarked: ‘the hurly-burly of a battle with its moans and gasps of the wounded, the roaring of the lions [...] earthquakes, hurricanes, catastrophes are the subject matter over which the fervent Welsh choralist loves to vent his tense emotionalism and to tear his passions to threads’.<sup>98</sup>

Protests, peaceful and otherwise, were seemingly a part of *eisteddfod* competitions not just in terms of the musical arrangements. Such occasions arose when, for example, a choir was believed to have competed with an excess (or in fact dearth) of singers in comparison to the required number stipulated in official *eisteddfod* rules. While some cases of this kind were addressed

<sup>97</sup> Available online via BL Sounds collection, Gramophone Record Catalogue 1899 <<http://sounds.bl.uk>> [accessed 6 June 2014].

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in Gareth Williams, “‘How’s the Tenors in Dowlais?’” The Choral Culture of the South Wales Coalfield c.1880–1930’, *Transactions of the Honourable Society*, 11 (2004), p.177.

via letters published in local newspapers, others were dealt with on a larger scale. In December 1906, a case was called before Ystrad County Court regarding an *eisteddfod* that took place at the Workmen's Hall in Ton Pentre on 22 October. The rules stated that the choirs should be made up of 60 choristers, although eye witnesses confirm that the accused choir only contained 36 legitimate members plus five 'dummy' singers drawn from the audience.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, the hiring of professional singers to sing solo parts of the choral test pieces was received unfavourably by *eisteddfod* audiences, as was bringing in singers from neighbouring areas to bolster numbers. Audiences would often respond immediately in the competitive arena, drowning out the singers in some cases or shouting abuse. 'Angry scenes' were reported at the 1914 Bristol Exhibition where the £150 prize was shared unequally between the Llanelli Royal Choir (164 points) and the Bristol St. Cecilian Choir (167 points). It was described that 'the Llanelly [*sic*] choristers and their friends were furious with the result [...] they hurled epithets at the adjudicators'.<sup>100</sup>

It seems that such displays of behaviour were witnessed commonly at *eisteddfod* competitions. Writing in 1904, the English composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912) remarked:

Please don't make any arrangements to wrap me in cotton wool. [...] I do a great deal of adjudicating in Wales among a very rough class of people; most adjudicators have had bad eggs and boots thrown at them by the people, but fortunately nothing of the kind has ever happened to me. I mention this so that you may know that my life is not spent entirely in drawing-rooms and concert halls, but among some of the roughest people in the world, who tell you what they think very plainly.<sup>101</sup>

Here, the use of the word 'rough' is particularly telling since differences between rough and respectable behaviour were scrutinised throughout the Victorian period. With respect to behaviours described, Andy Croll, a Welsh historian, importantly notes that while it was possible for individuals to engage in civilising pastimes such as music, which was viewed by the middle-

<sup>99</sup> *Weekly Mail*, 22 December 1906.

<sup>100</sup> *Herald of Wales*, 6 June 1914.

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Peter Stead, 'Amateurs and Professionals in the Cultures of Wales', in Geraint H. Jenkins and J. Beverley Smith (eds), *Politics and Society in Wales, 1840–1922: Essays in Honour of Ieuan Gwynedd Jones* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1988), pp.119–121.

classes as a promotion of respectability and a solution to intemperance, such individuals ‘could do so in such a way as to transgress those very standards’.<sup>102</sup> Another important thing to say, however, is that such acts of violence or anti-social behaviour were not carried out solely by men, although such behaviour is more commonly linked to masculine traits.

## Conclusions

Choral singing in Wales is becoming increasingly associated with men in the late nineteenth century. As this chapter has shown, industrial labour played a crucial role in the development of the tradition along gendered lines. At first, glee singing in Wales reflected the precedent in England; it was performed for bourgeois audiences in performance contexts restricted to those who had the means to pay for concert series subscriptions (what could be termed a top-down trajectory). However, industrial leaders such as Charlotte and John Guest used glee singing as a means of entertaining (but also educating) their workforce who were predominantly uneducated. Although musical sessions scheduled outside working hours were well-attended, once again social order was organised from the top down. By contrast, the Rhondda Glee Society presented an alternative view. As this chapter has detailed, the glee society was made up of miners who used music not only as a form of social bonding (in terms of friendship) but also to promote solidarity at times of difficulty (in terms of industrial strikes); importantly, this amateur male choir represented a working-class identity (a bottom-up trajectory). Despite a marked difference in membership, the choir also replicated the English tradition of glee singing, especially in relation to repertoire, concert dress and name.

On the other hand, the Rhondda Glee Society represented a continuation of the choral precedent set by the Côr Mawr. In addition to its working-class membership, continuity was

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<sup>102</sup> Andy Croll, ‘From Bar Stool to Choir Stall: Music and Morality in Late Victorian Merthyr’, *Llafur: The Journal of Welsh Labour History*, 6/1 (1992), p.23.

maintained through personal connections to Caradog's mixed choir (such as the glee society's conductor Tom Stephens). Moreover, both choirs represented Wales on stage. However, I argue that male singing was elevated in Wales following the 1893 Eisteddfod in Chicago. Although the competition in general created a focus on nationhood and music throughout Wales (in the same manner as *Côr Mawr*), the international scale of the Eisteddfod in Chicago presented a much larger platform for Welsh choral identity. In terms of gender, the \$1000 prize awarded to the Rhondda Glee Society for the male choral competition not only indicated that the success was a monumental achievement, but importantly that male choirs were valued more (at least in monetary terms) than their female counterparts (the prize for female choirs was \$300). But what of the female choirs? Did female choirs travel from Wales to compete? In the following chapter, I address such questions in relation to the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir. Moreover, I consider how this female choir compared with the Rhondda Glee Society in terms of social class, gender and respectability.

## Chapter Five

### **‘The Queen was Pleased’: Clara Novello Davies and the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir, 1883–1900**

As the previous chapter showed, choral singing in Wales began to be associated with male musical practices in the late nineteenth century. During this time, in which choral singing as a whole was gaining impetus, involvement in male choirs served not only to unite community members (see Bithell 2014), to promote a sense of nationhood (see Bohlman 2011) but also to signal publically an image of masculine identity for its participants. Particularly after the 1893 Eisteddfod in Chicago, a hierarchical order was evident in which male practices were afforded an elevated status. Male choirs continued to build their reputation into the twentieth century (and later twenty-first century) until they became known as ‘that Welsh musical institution, the male choir’.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, this chapter returns to the central question of this thesis: what happened to the women of Harlech? Did single-sex female choirs exist alongside the male choirs of the late 1870s and 1880s? How did they present themselves and, importantly, how were they represented?

While the previous chapter looked at one of the earliest male vocal parties in Wales, this chapter will focus upon the earliest known female choir in Wales: the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir and its conductor, Clara Novello Davies (1861–1943). From the field of feminist ethnomusicology, I follow the work of Ellen Koskoff whose early scholarly writings recognised the need for ethnomusicologists to study female musicians in order to dispel notions of male bias and unbalanced views of history. Since this thesis aims to present a complete historical picture of how choral singing developed in Wales, a consideration of prominent female choirs is necessary to contest the idea that Welsh

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<sup>1</sup> Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840–1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), p.4.

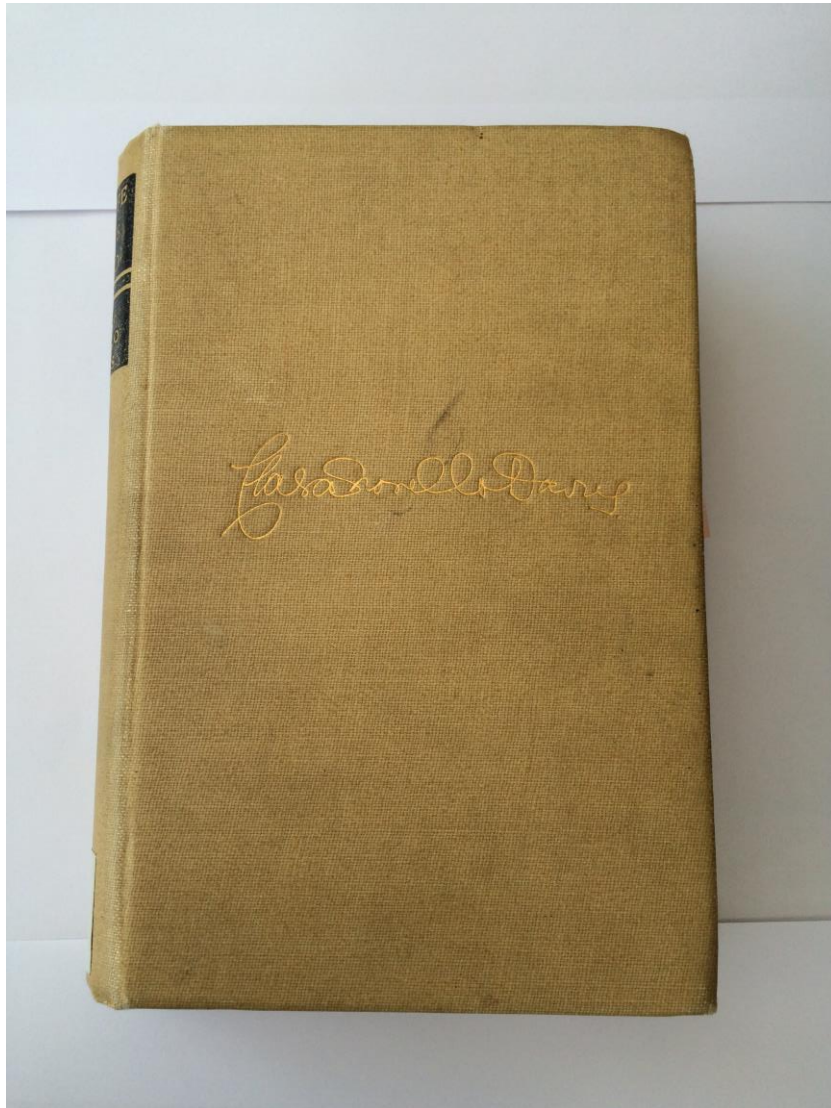
choral singing was (and to some extent is) entirely paternalistic. While scholars of gender such as Koskoff interrogate the binary division between men and women, and males and females (biologically given and socially constructed respectively), the discussion in this chapter is prompted largely by biological difference; men are prohibited from singing in a 'ladies' choir'. Moreover, the chapter provides what Koskoff might term a 'compensatory' history of female choral singing in Wales. I would argue, however, that this approach is necessary since a similar narrative has not yet been provided in scholarly literature.

Here, the autobiography of Clara Novello Davies will be utilised as a principal source (see Plate 5.1).<sup>2</sup> Written by Clara, aged 79 and three years before her death, this resource provides an invaluable insight into both her career and personal life. That being said, her motivations for writing the autobiography remain unclear since it is Clara's son, the well-known composer Ivor Novello (1893–1951), who wrote the foreword to the publication. Here, he provides memories of his mother at a younger age together with an account of her character. While the autobiography provides a glimpse into the life of Clara Novello Davies, the notion of using autobiographies for academic discussion can be problematic since some of the information provided (for example, personal correspondence) is unable to be verified.

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<sup>2</sup> Clara Novello Davies, *The Life I Have Loved* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1940).





**Plate 5.1:** The Autobiography of Clara Novello Davies<sup>3</sup>

However, this source has been utilised in this chapter to provide a contemporary understanding of female choral practice in Wales, showing also what Clara considered to be important and crucially what she wanted her audience to know and remember. Furthermore, this account in particular is significant since other first-hand accounts of the female choral tradition in Wales are scarce (see Chapter 6 for a second example). In terms of gendered practices, the autobiographical genre is also noteworthy since the

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<sup>3</sup> Photograph by Rachelle Barlow.

Victorian autobiography has been described often as a ‘male-dominated genre’.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the printing of a female autobiography by a well-established publisher, William Heinemann Ltd (founded in 1890), can be viewed as a destabilization of an earlier gendered precedent.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the publication does not wholly subvert the paradigm since it is framed by a male, Clara’s son (as previously mentioned). Here, the practice of a male framing a female serves as a gentle reminder of the patriarchal order. While the main purpose of this chapter is to uncover how females participated in the Welsh choral tradition in the late nineteenth century (specifically between the years of 1883 and 1900), I begin first with a biographical outline for Clara. As I will show, Clara inherited ideas about the division between social classes from a young age, together with a knowledge of broader musical developments; both are key to the understanding of her contribution to choral singing in Wales.

### **Clara Novello Davies: Family, Class and Music**

Clara Novello Davies was born in Canton, Cardiff, to Jacob Davies and his wife Margaret (née Evans). The family had strong religious connections with Clara’s maternal great-grandfather, the Reverend William Evans of Tonyrefail (1795–1891), being known as ‘the silver trumpet of the south’ for his unique style of pulpit recitative; his son (who was also called William Evans) was both a wealthy farmer and a leading Deacon at a Calvinistic Methodist chapel.<sup>6</sup> Based upon such religious values, it is perhaps unsurprising that the former refused to christen Clara Novello Davies (named after the renowned opera singer Clara Anastasia Novello (1818–1908), whom Jacob had heard singing) with ‘such a heathen name’ that was also ‘unchristian’ and ‘not Welsh’.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For further discussion of the gendered issues concerning Victorian autobiographies, see Clinton Machann, ‘Gender Politics and the Study of Nineteenth Century Autobiography’, *The Journal of Men’s Studies*, 6/3 (1998), pp.307–318.

<sup>5</sup> William Heinemann (1863–1920) established the company in Covent Garden, London (1890).

<sup>6</sup> Novello Davies, pp.4–5.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp.13–4.

Disregarding suggestions of alternative names, Jacob and Margaret insisted on calling their daughter Clara.

Notions of class divide also permeated Clara's family, particularly with relation to her parents. While Margaret was the daughter of a wealthy family that farmed land at Parc-Coed-Machen in St Fagans, Jacob was a 17-year-old miner when the two first met in chapel. The match of the pair was less than approved as Jacob 'was only a miner of iron ore and in no way considered a "match", far less a "catch", to one in Margaret's position locally. [... She] dared not let her parents know where her heart was safely in keeping'.<sup>8</sup> The pair met secretly for a while before, upon discovering such occurrences, Margaret's parents sent her to stay with an aunt in Pontypridd, who surprisingly helped to facilitate a secret wedding for the couple at a later date.

The marriage altered Margaret's social status as her father disowned her for marrying 'a young fool of a *miner* who [could not] even buy her bread let alone butter!'.<sup>9</sup> Thus the couple were required to live on a small budget of five shillings and ninepence a week plus leftovers provided in secret by Margaret's mother. That being said, Margaret utilised her background by educating Jacob, particularly in the use of the English language since he was principally a Welsh speaker. Here, the 'stipulation [was] that he should not speak [English] in public until she considered him perfect'.<sup>10</sup> She later turned the house into a quasi-private school in order to increase the family income. In addition, Margaret secured Jacob work with better wages from her uncle, 'David Evans of the Docks', and he later worked in a "'white-collar" position' with his uncle, John Jones, who established the Coedcae Colliery.<sup>11</sup>

However, one area in which Jacob did not require assistance was music. From a young age, he could be heard singing in chapel and began to conduct the village choir at the tender age of 12. Enthusiasm for music was demonstrated also by Clara, and the pair

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.9. The italics are reproduced from the original source.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp.11–12.

often spent weekends together at the local Salem Chapel (located in Canton), where both musical and religious interests were fostered. Sundays were devoted entirely to this cause: the day began with a morning service at 11am, followed by Sunday school at 2pm, Band of Hope meetings at 5pm, and ending with an evening service at 6pm. In addition, the father and daughter also attended Bible classes on weeknights.<sup>12</sup> Jacob played a leading role in the chapel, being both precentor and leader of the Band of Hope singing sessions.

Clara's musical ability was also utilised and her involvement increased significantly when she was officially recognised as the Chapel's harmonium player, playing at all services from the age of ten. Here, she became conversant with the activities of the chapel choir since the harmonium 'was situated in the gallery, with the choir at both sides'.<sup>13</sup> The use of musical instruments within the chapel setting has often caused controversy due to their association with popular musical activities, revelry and public houses (see Chapter 2).<sup>14</sup> The introduction of a harmonium at Bethania Chapel, Pendoylan, where Clara's maternal grandfather was working was met with particular indictment, especially as it was the first instrument of any kind to be heard at the chapel. Reacting against Clara's invitation to play, 'members shook their heads doubtfully' and exclaimed "What is the world coming to? It is a sin: the young people of to-day are without shame!".<sup>15</sup> This is important because it shows that Deacon Evans was not afraid to challenge perceived views, which would later be a much-valued family trait (particularly with relation to female choral singing).

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<sup>12</sup> Following the religious reforms of the early nineteenth century, the issue of temperance became pertinent when the temperance movement was initiated in England and Wales. While the focus for social reformers was placed at first upon individuals, strategies aimed at social groups soon emerged. This was linked especially to social class; reformers, who were predominantly middle-class, believed that the behaviour of the working classes needed to be addressed (especially in relation to temperance) in order for to stabilise society as a whole. In this matter, the Band of Hope played a crucial role. Although associated with the temperance movement, Band of Hope leaders did not focus solely upon the issue of alcohol consumption. Instead, they 'aimed to inculcate a new cultural identity in their young members, to facilitate the absorption of the upwardly mobile working-class families into respectable society'. See Lilian Lewis Shiman, 'The Band of Hope Movement: Respectable Recreation for Working-Class Children', *Victorian Studies*, 17/1 (1973), p.49.

<sup>13</sup> Novello Davies, p.27.

<sup>14</sup> For further discussion of this subject, see Rhidian Griffiths, 'Welsh Chapel Music: The Making of a Tradition', *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History*, 6 (1989), pp.35–43.

<sup>15</sup> Novello Davies, p.28.

It was singing that particularly interested the family. In the aforementioned role, Deacon Evans instilled his desire to improve vocal performance by forming a choir within the chapel. Similarly, Jacob was interested in the positive effects of singing and, following the visit of an American evangelist named R. T. Booth, he set up the Cardiff Blue Ribbon Choir in 1880 for the cause of temperance.<sup>16</sup> The choir competed annually at the Crystal Palace Festival, held in London, and was placed in first or second position on numerous occasions. That being said, the issue of temperance took preference over musical quality; while preparing for such a contest, Jacob refused to address the tuning issues of a tenor for fear he would return to alcohol addiction. Developing her skills, Clara became the official accompanist for the choir and was present when the choir was invited to perform at the National Eisteddfod in 1883, the first to be held in Cardiff. In particular, this event is noteworthy in terms of social status since, despite the concerns of her parents, Clara was not considered to belong to the working class at this time. For example, she wore here a black velvet dress adorned with sequins which her 'Cardiff dressmaker had secured [...] in Paris', a visual indicator of both social status and financial means.

Following her marriage to David Davies (a solicitor's clerk who sang in the Cardiff Blue Ribbon Choir) in 1883, Clara fulfilled the role of a housewife where it was presumed that '[she] would retire from public engagements' in order to do so.<sup>17</sup> However, her husband's salary was insufficient and she set about canvassing to secure a better job for him (in the manner that her mother had done for her father). In addition, she

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<sup>16</sup> The Blue Ribbon Movement was initiated by Francis Murphy in the United States during the 1870s, and was part of the greater Gospel Temperance Movement and general focus on temperance in the late nineteenth century. As this may suggest, the movement was associated with abstinence from alcohol, and those who joined the movement wore a blue ribbon on their lapel as a public marker of this decision. The movement initially took the form of meetings held in public halls, where 'rousing speeches', 'personal testimonies' and 'collective song[s]' were presented. Richard T. Booth, who was himself a reformed drinker, imported the movement to Britain in the 1880s. He launched a Blue Ribbon campaign, which lasted for five years due to its widespread appeal in the UK at this time. See 'Blue Ribbon Movement', in Jack S. Blocker, David M Fahey and Ian R Tyrrell, *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: An International Encyclopedia*, vol.1 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), pp.107–9.

<sup>17</sup> Novello Davies, p.56.

furthered her musical interests and maintained her income by teaching private vocal lessons.

### **Women of Harlech: The Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir**

The establishment of the Welsh Ladies' Choir (as it was first known) was due largely to Clara's father, Jacob. Following the death of both her mother and her first child Myfanwy Margaret (who lived only for weeks) within the first year of her marriage, Clara was introduced to the art of choral conducting by Jacob. She recalls that 'perfection in singing had always been [her] father's aim', and concepts of the qualities that signalled worthy performances came from hearing a variety of visiting 'world-famous singer[s]'.<sup>18</sup> Here, according to Clara, 'father was never too poor to afford front seats for us both at every [such] concert'.<sup>19</sup> While it was possible to hear both male and female solo artists on the stage in the late nineteenth century, the idea of seeing and hearing an all-female choir was seemingly innovatory:

One day he was looking over some part songs which the publishers had sent for his approval, and calling me over to him he said: 'Look here, Clara. These glees are for female voices only!' His tone of surprise was not to be wondered at – in those days when men monopolised most of the good things in life. 'Did you ever hear of such a thing?' he continued. [...] I went over the parts and was as enchanted as father. 'Why don't you get your pupils together and form a ladies' choir,' he went on. 'But who ever heard of a woman conductor?' I asked incredulously. But the idea held a great thrill for me, and I decided to try. Thank God for father who always had vision and was keen on innovations, whose sole thought about women was not the one prevalent in those days – that they should be tied to the home – but was only too pleased to have me follow along his own lines of endeavour.<sup>20</sup>

The notion of creating a female choir at this time must not be undervalued. Wales was a patriarchal society where male musical practices, particularly in terms of choral music, were the privileged and expected form. Such an initiative also belonged to a greater consciousness of respectability in the nineteenth century where the idea of women on stage provoked mixed responses. Therefore, the formation of a female-only choir led by a

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.58.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.59.

female conductor can be viewed as a conscious subversion of such patriarchal values. It is also interesting that while Clara believes this idea to be original, the thought of being a female conductor seems to be a greater innovation. She states, ‘so was born the first Welsh Ladies’ Choir, and I took my place as the first woman conductor’.<sup>21</sup>

The members of the newly-formed, Cardiff-based choir (c.70 ladies) were drawn largely from Clara’s private pupils. The advantage of utilising her pupils in this manner meant that consistency in terms of tone, pronunciation and breath control were achieved easily as each had received identical training. In fact, qualities such as vocal production and choral blend were highlighted in the media. In a supplement entitled ‘The Art of Choir Training’ (from *The Musical Standard*), the question ‘What are the secrets of Madame Davies’ success with her choir?’ is answered with ‘all the members are pupils of their conductor [...] thus a perfect blending of voice is attained’.<sup>22</sup> The creation of a choir from private pupils also invokes a notion of hierarchical social status between women who could afford such lessons and those who could not.

The choral rehearsals were held in an exacting manner. In the aforementioned supplement, it was noted also that Clara personally led every rehearsal and that members of the choir were required to be ‘note perfect and have the words memorised’ before work would commence on a new piece.<sup>23</sup> It is suggested, therefore, that the choristers were required to possess a degree of musical literacy in order to read from and learn using musical scores. In terms of performance practice, the statement also highlights the fact

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.60. Female conductors have scarcely featured in professional musical settings, and the notion of women as conductors continues to be contested today (see, for example, ‘Why are there so few female conductors?’, BBC News Magazine, 12 September 2008 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>> [accessed 25 October 2012]). It has been suggested that this dearth is attributed to the fact that conducting an ensemble is an expression of power; an exclusively male activity in a patriarchal society. J. Michele Edwards points out that while Fanny Mendelssohn (1805–1847) was known to conduct, it took place within a private setting. She notes that the first female conductors to maintain careers in the USA were Emma Roberto Steiner (c.1852–1929) and Caroline B. Nichols (1864–1939); both of whom were contemporaries of Clara Novello Davies. That being said, Edwards does not mention any British female conductors active at this time, and thus it is highly likely that Clara would not have seen or heard of other such conductors either in Britain or abroad. See J. Michele Edwards, ‘Women on the Podium’, in José Antonio Bowen (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.220–36.

<sup>22</sup> Cardiff Central Library: MS 4.1290, ‘Voice and Song’ supplement, *The Musical Standard*, 20 March 1915, pp.214–6.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

that performances were given without visual prompts. Where discrepancies in vocal production occurred between singers in rehearsals, Clara would amend the ‘defect’ by making them sing one by one in order to ‘put it right in a moment’.<sup>24</sup> Her high standards were also marked by ‘get[ting the] pupils to recite a great deal’ and concentrating on vocal tone ‘until the voice is properly formed’.<sup>25</sup> Note the similarities here between the repetitive learning process in music and that of language (where Clara’s mother aided her father’s linguistic skills). The notion of elocution is also pertinent in Wales since some *eisteddfodau* offered medals for achievements in this area. It is clear that the art of elocution was important for the choir since concert programmes included the name of an elocutionist in large font.<sup>26</sup>

Following its foundation, the choir sought to build a reputation both locally and nationally. Throughout the late 1880s, the choir performed annual concerts in Cardiff to support charitable causes. Following such concerts, Joseph L. Roeckel (a Bristol-based composer, 1838–1923) initiated a collaboration with the choir, for which he specifically wrote a cantata named ‘The Gitana’ in 1885. For the choir’s performance of this piece in Cardiff, the accompaniment was provided somewhat unconventionally by eight pianos with sixteen pianists who functioned ‘in lieu of an orchestra’.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the choir performed other compositions written by Roeckel for female voices, such as *Westward Ho!* (1874) and *The Minstrel Prince* (c.1889). While the reputation of Clara’s female choir

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<sup>24</sup> *The Musical Herald*, 1 Dec 1900.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Clara’s interest in vocal pedagogy extended beyond her musical lessons. In the late 1920s, she published a book entitled *You Can Sing* (London: Selwyn & Blount, 1928) which dealt exclusively with issues of voice production, including techniques on breathing.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, the poster for the Wood Street Chapel Concert in Cardiff (11 October 1937) where the elocutionist is listed as Irene Price. McCann Collection, Royal Academy of Music <<http://apollo.ram.ac.uk>> [accessed 28 March 2012]. The issue of elocution is pertinent here because it functioned as a marker of social distinction, and thus the art of learning elocution was for the purpose of bettering oneself. In 1890, the Congregationalist minister Reverend Dr Thomas C. Edwards, ‘Cynonfardd’ (1848–1927) published *Darllen a Siarad: Llawlyfr ar ‘Elocution’* [*Reading and Speaking: Handbook on ‘Elocution’*] (Merthyr Tydfil: J. Williams, 1890), which also included suggestions for hand movements during speech. Edwards was respected both in Wales and America, to where he emigrated in 1870. He became Professor of Elocution and Oratory in Wyoming Seminary (Kingston, Pennsylvania) and was ‘highly recommended as an elocutionist’ in an advert for a public appearance in the newspaper *Omego*, 14 Nov 1895 <<http://fultonhistory.com>> [accessed 13 October 2012]. He was known also for his musical connections and, in 1889, he established the Cynonfardd Eisteddfod in Edwardsville, Pennsylvania, which continues to take place annually.

<sup>27</sup> Novello Davies, p.60.



increased significantly after such concerts, her personal reputation also continued to grow as she remained musically involved with her father. For example, Clara and Jacob championed performances of high-profile singers such as the Farewell Tour of the English tenor Sims Reeves (1821–1900), who appeared in Cardiff in 1890.

In terms of national recognition, members of the choir made their debut at St. James' Hall in London on 2 July of the same year. Organised by Daniel Mayer and managed by George H. Brierly (editor of the *Weekly Mail*), the concert was a large-scale production including ten German grand pianofortes, an organist (Dr Turpin), vocal soloists (Ffrangcon Davies and Nellie Asher, who had replaced Amy Shermin because she had influenza), and violinist (Johannes Wolff).<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, the number of pianists employed is inconsistent between sources as Clara recalls 'the excitement of twenty hands scampering over the keyboards' (thus ten pianists), while *The Pall Mall Gazette* reports that the accompaniment was provided 'by a band of twenty Welsh lady pianists'.<sup>29</sup> Following the earlier precedent of supporting charitable causes, the proceeds from this concert were donated to the Morfa Colliery Explosion fund after fatal explosions occurred in 1863, 1870 and 1890. Links to the choir's Welsh background were also highlighted in the programme which 'was decorated with extremely pretty views of picturesque spots in the neighbourhood of Cardiff'.<sup>30</sup> The hall itself was also adorned with foliage and flowers.

The programme included Roeckel's 'Westward Ho!' and an arrangement of a traditional Welsh love song entitled 'Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn' ('Watching the White Wheat', arranged for the choir by the Welsh composer David Emlyn Evans, 1843–1913). According to Clara, the audience 'shouted themselves hoarse' and requested encores of the latter piece in particular.<sup>31</sup> Regarding encores, the *Western Mail* reported that 'the encores were so frequent and of so persistent a character that the programme was delayed nearly 25 minutes [...] and the cantata was nearly wholly repeated, surely an unheard of

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<sup>28</sup> *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 July 1890.

<sup>29</sup> Novello Davies, p.61; *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 July 1890.

<sup>30</sup> *Western Mail*, 3 July 1890.

<sup>31</sup> Novello Davies, p.61.

thing’.<sup>32</sup> Overall, the inclusion of Welsh-language repertoire is significant both in terms of highlighting and maintaining a sense of native cultural identity. This contributes to an emerging sense of nationhood and national consciousness occurring amongst diasporic (especially Celtic) communities living in London during the 1890s. For example, Helen Brennan has documented the invention of the Irish céilí, which first took place in Bloomsbury Hall, London on 30 October 1897. Brennan notes that the impetus to form a social activity to be promoted by the Gaelic League (*Conradh na Gaeilge*, established 1893) came primarily from Fionan Mac Coluim (1875–1966), a Gaelic League organiser who had been inspired by Scots ‘ceilithe’ nights in London.<sup>33</sup> Following the concert, Mayer introduced Clara to the Polish pianist and composer Ignacy Paderewski (1860–1941) who performed repeatedly at the hall within the same year (20 May, 29 May, 10 June, 12 November and 27 November). In terms of the choir, he reportedly commented that ‘this [was] the most wonderful choral singing [he had] ever heard’.<sup>34</sup> In addition, Joseph Bennett, a London-based music critic, hailed the choir ‘the most wonderful body of voices in the United Kingdom’ in the *Daily Telegraph* the following day.<sup>35</sup>

Such positive reviews continued to heighten both knowledge of the choir and its reputation within a national context.<sup>36</sup> Three years later, the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir gained international success and recognition when they competed against other female choirs in Chicago. The following section will present an account of the choir’s involvement in the *eisteddfod* held as part of the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Western Mail*, 4 July 1890.

<sup>33</sup> Helen Brennan, ‘Reinventing the Tradition: The Boundaries of Irish Dance’, *History Ireland*, 2/2 (1994), pp.22–24.

<sup>34</sup> Novello Davies, p.62. Numerous contemporary sources contained quotes of a similar nature from recognized musicians; the inclusion of such quotes functioned as a way of validating the efforts of a particular upcoming musical artist or group.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> To my knowledge, negative reviews of the choir did not exist in the press at this time.

<sup>37</sup> It must be noted that due to the elaborate nature of the plans for the fair in Chicago, the exhibition was postponed until 1893 to fulfil the proposal. The ‘official’ 400-year anniversary was marked on 21 October 1892 with dedication ceremonies. For further information, see Ann McKinley, ‘Music for the Dedication Ceremonies of the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1892’, *American Music*, 3/1 (1985), pp.42–51.

## Singing at the World's Columbian Exposition

The World's Columbian Exposition, known also as the World's Fair, was initiated to commemorate the 400-year anniversary of Christopher Columbus' 'discovery' of America in 1492. The exhibition was a prestigious event that afforded the host city the opportunity not only to promote itself in an international context but also to showcase cultural products (such as music, literature, art and architecture) from around the world. Such a celebration involved bids from cities that were keen to host the event, particularly New York City. However, Chicago won the bid due to 'judiciously applied political pressure and bribery'.<sup>38</sup> At the time, there was an emergent sense of national consciousness in America and thus music festivals were important as vehicles both for expressing and performing identity. In addition, the benefits of hosting such an event also included an opportunity to acquire international prestige as a city with the economic means to host such an exhibition. Of course, further visitors to the area would also result in economic gain. Chicago is also a significant area in terms of Celtic migration. Between 1903 and 1922, Captain Francis O'Neill (1848–1936), an Irish-born policeman, published a significant number of Irish traditional folk melodies that were collected from the Irish diaspora in Chicago. In fact, his main collection *The Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems* (1907) remains both highly regarded and well utilised by Irish traditional musicians.<sup>39</sup>

Connections between Wales and America were also common in the nineteenth century. In fact, the first significant emigration to America was reported in 1795 when 60 Welsh people settled in the new Republic.<sup>40</sup> Over the following century, migration numbers increased significantly with the United States Census reporting 267,160 residents with Welsh backgrounds by 1900.<sup>41</sup> According to the Welsh historian Bill Jones, the

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<sup>38</sup> McKinley, p.42.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Patrick O'Sullivan, 'Developing Irish Diaspora Studies: A Personal View', *New Hibernia Review*, 7/1 (2003), pp.130–148.

<sup>40</sup> David M. Guion, 'Eisteddfod Gydgenedlaethol: A Welsh Festival at the World's Columbian Exposition', *Welsh Music/Cerddoriaeth Cymru*, 9/2 (1989–90), p.22.

<sup>41</sup> Linda Pohly, "'I Wish I Could get my Choral Society to Sing in that Way": The Eisteddfod in Pennsylvania in the Nineteenth Century', *Welsh Music*, 9/8 (1995–1996), p.51. Pohly also wrote her PhD

earliest migrations involved agricultural workers moving from rural areas of Wales to areas such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and later mid-Western states (notably Wisconsin). In the late nineteenth century, agricultural workers continued to migrate to these established Welsh communities as well as additional states, including Washington, Nebraska, South Dakota and Oregon. This type of migration was fuelled not only by poverty and a shortage of land in Wales, but also by ‘social, religious and linguistic tensions between farmers and landowners’.<sup>42</sup> For them, America offered plentiful agricultural opportunities through inexpensive farmland.

Skilled industrial workers also sought to emigrate to America. In particular, Jones highlights that this type of migration began in the 1820s when international networks began to be forged within an emerging global economy. However, from the 1850s onwards, workers and their families migrated to escape economic depression caused by the collapse of local iron industries in Wales, as well as to seek better working conditions and wages. These workers tended to settle in close proximity to the Ohio and Pennsylvania coalfields.<sup>43</sup> David M. Guion, a musicologist, states also that the United States was attractive for intellectuals and religious dissenters whose free speech was repressed by the British government.<sup>44</sup> However, this refers to an earlier period since the repression of free speech took place in Britain in the eighteenth century; this was eradicated by the gradual relaxation of the Penal Laws in Ireland from 1778, when Catholics regained freedom of speech.

It is therefore certain that emigration was at the forefront of public consciousness during the nineteenth century in Wales. For example, it was reported in Bethesda (North Wales) in 1870 *‘bod yr ysbryd ymfudiaeth yn dechreu cynnhyrfu y bobl eleni eto’* (English, ‘that the

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dissertation on related issues. See Pohly, ‘Welsh Choral Music in America in the Nineteenth Century’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 1989).

<sup>42</sup> Bill Jones, ‘Raising the Wind: Emigrating from Wales to the USA in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries’, paper presented at the Annual Public Lecture of the Cardiff Centre for Welsh American Studies, Cardiff University, 2003. Accessed online: <<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/welsh/resources/RaisingTheWind.pdf>>[accessed 6 May 2012].

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Guion, p.22.

emigration spirit is starting to agitate the people this year again’).<sup>45</sup> The decision to move was aided by a surplus of information relating to emigration available to Welsh residents at the time through printed sources (such as newspapers, periodicals and emigrant guide books) as well as first-hand accounts presented in letters sent to Wales by those who had already departed. Moreover, a degree of peer pressure was also evident since those left behind were considered to lack adventurous spirit and to possess a lower social status. While emigration was often seen as a solution to economic downturn, savvy individuals (such as emigration agents) and institutions (including transport companies) seized the opportunity to capitalize upon *‘y llanw ymfudol’* (English, ‘the emigration tide’).<sup>46</sup>

It must be noted that the Welsh language remained an important part of the emigrants’ lives. In 1851, the newspaper *Y Drych* (*The Mirror*) was established in downtown Manhattan to report social, political and religious concerns to members of the Welsh diaspora (in America and Canada) using only the Welsh language. In 2001, the newspaper celebrated its 150-year anniversary, which highlights the extant of the desire to connect to cultural identity through language.<sup>47</sup> In addition to their native linguistic skills, the new Welsh diasporic communities had brought indigenous cultural practices such as choral singing and the *eisteddfod*. Although it is unclear when the first *eisteddfod* organised by Welsh-Americans occurred, it is documented that the event had become established by the 1850s.

One of the most notable Welsh-American *eisteddfodau* was organised as part of the World’s Columbian Exhibition at Chicago in 1893. Consisting of a four-day programme (5–8 September), the event was designed to promote the *eisteddfod* on an international platform. This was facilitated by the Chicago Cymmrodorion (later renamed National Cymmrodorion Society), a society that was established in 1890 when Chicago’s bid for

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Jones, p.12.

<sup>46</sup> A term that appeared in reports of mass migration from 1852. See Jones (2003) for further information.

<sup>47</sup> For a detailed history of the newspaper, see Aled Jones and Bill Jones, *Welsh Reflections: Y Drych & America* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2001).

the event was successful.<sup>48</sup> The secretary of the society, William ap Madoc (n.d.), was instrumental to the success of this project. A Welsh migrant himself, he was involved extensively in Welsh-American relations, including editing a Welsh-American newspaper named *Y Columbia*.<sup>49</sup> To incite participatory interest in the international Chicago Eisteddfod, he produced 10,000 bilingual pamphlets to be distributed in Wales. They asked: 'Will the Welsh people neglect this grandest and most exceptional opportunity of exhibiting THEIR literary and musical characteristics? "THEY WILL NOT!" is the united voice of the Cymry of America and their descendants, and we pray that the same will be the voice of GWALIA'.<sup>50</sup> In addition, the major contests were highlighted alongside details of the sizable monetary prizes (up to \$5000).

Despite the circulation of the open invitation, Clara recalls receiving a personal message from ap Madoc inquiring if she would like her choir to compete for the Ladies' Choral Prize.<sup>51</sup> Such an opportunity would not only promote her choir (particularly as an all-female Welsh choir), but also the choirs of Wales in general. However, the financial burden of being involved in the competition was great and the timing of the competition was not ideal for Clara since she had recently given birth to a son, David Ivor Davies ('Ivor Novello', born 15 January 1893). Her father was highly supportive, both personally and financially though. In his search for sponsorship to aid his daughter, he turned to Lascales Carr, the editor of the *Western Mail*, who offered the princely sum of £500 towards the venture on condition that the editor of a similar important South Wales newspaper did the same. He replied:

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<sup>48</sup> Cymmrodorion societies were also known in Britain; the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion was established by London Welshmen in 1751. The word *cymmrodorion* is formed from *cyn-frodorion* meaning 'earliest natives'. See <<http://www.cymmrodorion.org/our-history>> [accessed 14 June 2012].

<sup>49</sup> He moved to Utica, New York State in 1868 and later to Chicago in 1890 when he assisted the foundation of the society.

<sup>50</sup> Swansea University Library: PB2103, *The World's Columbian Exposition International Eisteddfod* (sic), *Chicago, 1893: Cais a gvaoddiad cenedlaethol ac eisteddfodol / A National and Eisteddfodic Call and Invitation* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1891), p.7. Capitals are reproduced from the source.

<sup>51</sup> Novello Davies, p.78.

my dear young lady [...] your dream of bringing back such laurels to South Wales is laudable in itself, but the whole idea leaves me cold [...] you talk of taking a number of girls across the Atlantic, then half-way across the American continent, as though you were organising no more than a choir picnic! [...] Did it never strike you that you may be lacking in *ability* to accomplish this thing you would go to great lengths to attain?<sup>52</sup>

Although it is unclear whether the editor is questioning here the ability of Clara (perhaps of her organisational skills) or the choir as a whole, neither had been questioned in such a manner before this time. Nevertheless, Carr donated the original sum offered and sent an assistant (William Davies) to help raise the remainder (£2500), which was achieved within a month due in part to his efforts and in part to fundraising concerts held by the choir. Here, Clara's exacting standards regarding vocal quality and technique remained paramount and the choir was reduced in number to ensure excellence, and also to reduce costs.

The test pieces for the female choral competition of the Chicago Eisteddfod were 'The Spanish Gipsy Girl' (arr. Walter Damrosch) by Eduard Lassen (1830–1904) and 'The Lord is my Shepherd' (arr. Schubert).<sup>53</sup> In terms of the latter, however, the Welsh Ladies' Choir sang an American arrangement. According to Clara, the former piece is 'one of the most difficult things ever written for ladies' voices. It calls for a quick dramatic attack and technique of every description [...] the voices blend in perfect simulation of the tambourine's prolonged shaking'.<sup>54</sup> Despite many of the choristers suffering with seasickness on the journey from Southampton to New York, Clara attempted to continue rehearsals aboard the ship even when members were unwilling. Several members of the choir were also entered to compete in the solo contralto contest where the test piece was Gluck's 'Che faro senza Euridice?' from the opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762). Here, panic was roused when Clara learnt in America that the soloists were required to include the recitative which her entrants (namely Bessie Evans and Annie Bowen) had not rehearsed. She spent hours teaching the section to the women through the night, using a piano in

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p.81.

<sup>53</sup> I was unable to source manuscript copies of these test pieces for this thesis.

<sup>54</sup> Novello Davies, p.91.

the bandstand of a public park close to their Chicago hotel; a fact that demonstrated her dedication to her pupils.

The Chicago Eisteddfod attracted an audience of several thousand over the four days of the contests. For the mixed chorus competition (held on Friday 8 September), an audience numbering approximately 8000 people (that was, ‘the largest and most enthusiastic audience for any musical event of the entire fair’) gathered to hear the choirs.<sup>55</sup> According to Guion, many Welsh members were easily distinguishable as they wore badges with the motto ‘*Y gwir yn erbyn y byd*’ (English, ‘the truth against the world’).<sup>56</sup> In terms of the Eisteddfod as a whole, each of the days was programmed to include contests (taking place predominantly in the afternoon), presentations of formal papers on subjects such as oratory and elocution, non-competitive vocal and harp performances and organ interludes. Moreover, each day ended with items sung by a massed chorus comprising of competing choirs which were required to take part. The music adjudicators for the Eisteddfod were John Thomas (1826–1913, harpist to Queen Victoria), Ben Davies (1858–1943, a Welsh tenor),<sup>57</sup> William Tomlins (conductor of Chicago’s Apollo Music Club from 1875 to 1898), D. J. J. Mason (director of the Wilkes-Barre Oratorio Society), William Courtney (a British-born tenor living in New York), John Gower (also British-born, cathedral organist working in Denver, Colorado) and Mary Davies (1855–1930, a Welsh soprano who was well-known in the fashionable London music scene).<sup>58</sup> Here, it is interesting to note that men predominantly feature on the judging panel.

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<sup>55</sup> Guion, p.35.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.28.

<sup>57</sup> Ben Davies has a wider significance in relation to this thesis. When he was in his early teenage years, he was a boy alto for Caradog’s Côr Mawr in 1872 and in 1873. Although initially from Pontardawe in the Swansea Valley, he was trained at the Royal Academy of Music (1878–1880) in London after his talent in singing was recognised by Brinley Richards who heard him singing in Swansea. Following such formal education, he became one of the leaders of the Carl Rosa Opera Company (established in London in 1873). Despite his successes in the metropolis, Davies maintained a connection to Wales through performances in the country as well as by acting as a representative for his native land (such as at the Chicago Eisteddfod). For further information about Ben Davies, see *The Cambrian*, 4 August 1899. Academic or historical studies on Ben Davies have not been forthcoming.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p.31.



For the ladies' choral contest, the Welsh Ladies' Choir filed onto the stage while the audience cheered and rose to give the singers a standing ovation even before they had started. The concert dress for the choir was simple; following an earlier precedent, the women wore plain white gowns and Clara wore a gold satin dress with a lace-trimmed train. Concert dress was evidently important to Clara. In fact, she admired the 'smart' appearance of a female choir from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania who were dressed in 'Parisian-looking gowns'; she called her own ladies' appearances 'unsophisticated' by comparison.<sup>59</sup> It is interesting that her evaluation is made with reference to a Pennsylvanian choir since Pennsylvania attracted over 100,000 Welsh immigrants by the time of the competition, the main settlements being Wilkes-Barre and Scranton.<sup>60</sup> In fact, an *eisteddfod* had been held in Wilkes-Barre the previous year on 17 March 1892. Here, a female choirs had already performed since it is recorded that 'female choirs [of] not less than 12 voices' sang 'Arise Again Glad Summer Morn' (by Leslie) to compete for a \$75 prize.<sup>61</sup> In addition, Scranton was the only town to be represented in each of the major contests at the Chicago Eisteddfod.

The Welsh Ladies' Choir was the last ensemble (of three) to perform the test pieces. Despite their best efforts, Clara was doubtful about the prize since she believed that the aforementioned choir had delivered a 'perfect' performance. That being said, John Thomas announced that the Welsh Ladies' Choir had won the Ladies' Choral Prize (\$300), stating also that 'only absolute perfection could have surpassed the [choir] that preceded it!'.<sup>62</sup> According to Clara, the audience approved greatly with many throwing accessories, such as handkerchiefs and hats, into the air while cheering. The achievement was further highlighted with prizes for each of the members of the choir who had competed in the solo contests (both soprano and contralto categories). Guido importantly points out that American (or Welsh-American) singers did not win prizes in any event

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<sup>59</sup> Novello Davies, pp.89–90.

<sup>60</sup> Pohly (1995–1996), p.51.

<sup>61</sup> *The Scranton Republican*, 15 February 1892.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Pohly (1995–1996), p.92.

where Welsh visitors were involved; the standard of vocal teaching being highlighted as the deciding factor in granting the award.<sup>63</sup>

Following this reception, the choir received numerous invitations to perform across America. While these performances offered further opportunities to promote the choir's activities, considerations had to be given to the restrictions of both finance and time; a tour of similar proportions would take an agent numerous months to arrange. Taking on the role of musical agents were Clara's husband, Dave and her father, Jacob, who haphazardly accepted offers across the country without considering the amount of time required to travel between venues. Although the exact route of the tour remains unknown, it is certain that they visited Kansas City, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Brooklyn (New York). Disregarding logistical factors, the choir was greeted positively across the country, particularly by diasporic Welsh communities who provided them with 'a heart-warming Welsh welcome'.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, Clara recalls the choir being asked to sing at a chapel service in memory of Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887), a notable congregational minister. Here, the choir sang Negro spirituals that Clara had learnt from hearing the Fisk Jubilee Singers (from Fisk University, Tennessee) several times in one week as a child. Such repertoire thus linked Welsh musical practices with a wider sense of both American identity and social history.

Reception surrounding the choir's success was communicated back to Wales via telegrams sent to Lascalles Carr (the aforementioned editor of the *Western Mail*), and locals could learn further details by purchasing the newspaper. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the choir were welcomed appreciatively back into the UK with people gathering at Southampton port and at the choir's hometown. In Cardiff, the streets had been decorated with flags and torch lights (much like the earlier celebration of Caradog's achievements with *Côr Mawr*) with thousands of locals gathering at the station to witness

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<sup>63</sup> Guido, p.32.

<sup>64</sup> Novello Davies, p.94.

the incoming choir. In addition, Clara's personal achievements were highlighted with gifts of 'a great Welsh harp of flowers, with satin bows, and a beautiful satin high Welsh hat'.<sup>65</sup> It is clear that the international success of this female voice choir was both recognised and celebrated in its native home.

### **National Recognition**

While it may seem logical for musical ensembles to gain recognition in the international field following national success, the opposite occurred for Clara's Welsh Ladies' Choir. Although the choir was known in Cardiff prior to the Chicago Eisteddfod, recognition in the broader national context was lacking. This was remedied in 1894 when Clara received an invitation to perform before Queen Victoria at her residence in Osborne House on the Isle of Wight on 8 February 1894. The invitation was linked to the choir's success in Chicago as the adjudicator John Thomas had seemingly informed the Queen about the ensemble. The local press gathered outside Clara's Cardiff home upon hearing the news, which confirmed to her that the request was authentic. It is important to note that such opportunities were previously unheard of as no other Welsh choirs had been honoured in this way.<sup>66</sup>

As the choir's reputation had been built at Chicago, Clara was keen only to involve those that had been involved in the concert to ensure consistency. That being said, one aspect that was altered related to the concert dress worn by the choir, in which the Welsh national costume was favoured over plain white gowns (see Plate 5.2). She explained:

They made a picturesque appeal in Welsh National costume. I had them looking uniformly alike, and was dressed myself in Welsh peasant costume, with its bright red flannel skirt, check apron and shoulder shawl, white blouse with cherry-coloured ribbons, and black patent shoes with shining buckles. We also wore the traditional high Welsh hats.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.97.

<sup>66</sup> As it may be recalled from Chapter 4, the Treorchy Male Choir performed for Queen Victoria on 29 November 1895 and the Rhondda Glee Society sang before Her Majesty on 23 February 1898.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.101.



**Plate 5.2:** Welsh costume worn by members of the Welsh Ladies' Choir<sup>68</sup>

The idea of traditional dress was actually a nineteenth-century construct that was promoted extensively by Lady Llanover (1802–1896) in an attempt to revive Welsh values that were under threat, including the use of the Welsh language. However, the costume itself is based upon the ‘common dress of the peasant, the farm servants and cottagers’ in eighteenth-century Wales.<sup>69</sup> Its adoption as a national outfit meant also supporting local flannel and woollen industries that were endangered by cheaper imported goods (such as cotton) during the nineteenth century. In fact, Lady Llanover advocated wearing such

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<sup>68</sup> St Fagans National History Museum: F71.175.3. Photograph by St Fagans National History Museum. The costume was donated to the Museum in 1971 by Mrs Olwen L. Havard whose mother, Mary Jane Phillips of Pontlloftyn, wore the costume as a member of Clara's Welsh Ladies' Choir.

<sup>69</sup> Ken Etheridge, *Welsh Costume* (Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1977), p.11.

costumes to support local manufactures; here, there is no suggestion that the national dress be worn as an expression of a national identity.<sup>70</sup>



**Plate 5.3:** The Welsh Ladies' Choir in national dress, 1897<sup>71</sup>

That the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir appeared before the Queen dressed in Welsh costume is interesting, particularly because it had become a marker of both Welsh tradition and identity. Moreover, this was a feminine image of Welsh identity that had no equivalent in male sartorial fashion.<sup>72</sup> The history of the tall black hats worn by the women (see Plate 5.3) is unclear. The hats were originally worn by men. As in other parts of Britain during the seventeenth century, women also wore these hats. However, the custom had relinquished in other parts of Britain during the eighteenth century. Christine Stevens argues that 'the style of the hat is less relevant than the fact it was worn by both

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<sup>70</sup> Refers to an essay written by Lady Llanover entitled 'On the advantages resulting from the preservation of the costumes of the Principality', which won a prize at the Gwent and Dyfed Eisteddfod in 1834. See also Christine Stevens, 'Welsh Costume and the Influence of Lady Llanover', NLW website <[http://www.llgc.org.uk/fileadmin/documents/pdf/Christine\\_stevens\\_S.pdf](http://www.llgc.org.uk/fileadmin/documents/pdf/Christine_stevens_S.pdf)> [accessed 10 June 2012].

<sup>71</sup> Photograph held at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. See 'Welsh Women's History 1900–1918: Entertainment' <<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/2383/>> [accessed 19 March 2012].

<sup>72</sup> With relation to male dress in Wales, Etheridge notes that men in eighteenth-century Wales wore a 'pair' consisting of 'coat and trouser or breeches' (p.19). He notes also that 'the costume of the Welshmen of the 19<sup>th</sup> century does not differ a great deal from that of general fashions in England' (p.95). See Etheridge (1977).

sexes', and was recognised as women adopting a male form rather than being a unisex hat.<sup>73</sup>

On the other hand, Etheridge argues that the hat was not universally worn, appearing most predominantly in Cardiff, Bangor and Carmarthen.<sup>74</sup> Quoting lines from contemporary ballads to support his argument, he suggests that this fashion originated in France where 'the ladies of the Court of Louis XVI wore such high hats [...] to cover their elaborate periwigs'.<sup>75</sup> As in France, wearing a tall hat in Wales was an indicator of social status and wealth since it was a luxury item priced around five guineas at the start of the nineteenth century. Cheaper alternatives in the form of bonnets, or hats made from straw or felt were thus often utilised for those lacking the appropriate economic means. In terms of the choir, the fact that some members of the ensemble are wearing the hat in publicity photographs serves as a visual marker of both economic means and social status. It is also notable that Clara wanted them to look 'uniformly alike' meaning that the presentation of a collective national identity was preferred.

Following the performance for Queen Victoria, the musical activities of the choir were widely documented in the press both in Wales and England, with details of tours and concerts being publicised. Once again, it was the *Western Mail* that willingly promoted the choir in the South Wales area, printing adverts and reviews of the South Wales tour (which included concerts in Bridgend, Neath, Maesteg, Swansea, Llanelli and Cardiff) that took place just eleven days after the royal performance (19–24 February 1894). However, the choir did not limit itself to tours in Wales. Instead, it toured England (particularly in northern England) two months later, with concert performances organised in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Manchester, Liverpool, Birkenhead, Southport, Preston, Wigan and other Lancashire towns between 2 April and 14 April 1894. The following

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<sup>73</sup> Stevens, p.2.

<sup>74</sup> Etheridge, p.65.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p.45.

Figure shows the extent to which the choir's tours were supported by the press in England and Wales:

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Place:</b>	<b>Type:</b>	<b>Details:</b>
<i>Western Mail</i>	16 Feb	Cardiff	Advert	Performance for the Queen.
<i>Western Mail</i>	17 Feb	Cardiff	Advert	Performance for the Queen.
<i>Western Mail</i>	19 Feb	Cardiff	Article	Provides South Wales tour details.
<i>Western Mail</i>	21 Feb	Cardiff	Review	Concert at Gwyn Hall, Neath.
<i>Western Mail</i>	23 Feb	Cardiff	Review	Concert at Town Hall, Maesteg.
<i>Western Mail</i>	24 Feb	Cardiff	Article	On the 'Royal Welsh Nightingales'.
<i>Western Mail</i>	26 Feb	Cardiff	Review	Concert at a market hall, Llanelli.
<i>Western Mail</i>	28 Feb	Cardiff	Review	Concert in Swansea.
<i>Birmingham Daily Post</i>	17 Mar	Birmingham	Advert	Concert at Town Hall, Birmingham.
<i>Birmingham Daily Post</i>	22 Mar	Birmingham	Advert	Concert at Town Hall, Birmingham.
<i>Western Mail</i>	27 Mar	Cardiff	Advert	Concert in Cardiff with the SMB <sup>76</sup>
<i>Birmingham Daily Post</i>	28 Mar	Birmingham	Advert	Concert in Birmingham.
<i>Birmingham Daily Post</i>	02 Apr	Birmingham	Advert	As above.
<i>Western Mail</i>	03 Apr	Cardiff	Article	Details fortnight-long northern tour.
<i>Western Mail</i>	03 Apr	Cardiff	Article	Brief repetition of above.
<i>Liverpool Mercury</i>	05 Apr	Liverpool	Article	Concert at St George's Hall.
<i>Baner ac Amserau Cymru</i>	25 Apr	Denbigh	Review	Concert at The Pavilion, Carnarvon.
<i>Y Goleuad</i>	27 Apr	Caernarvon	Review	As above.
<i>The Morning Post</i>	28 Apr	London	Advert	Concert at Royal Albert Hall with Patti.
<i>The Morning Post</i>	30 Apr	London	Advert	As above.
<i>Western Mail</i>	07 May	Cardiff	Review	Concert in Cardiff. <sup>77</sup>

**Figure 5.1:** Welsh Ladies' Choir Press Reports, February–May 1894

Utilising such materials, it is clear that the popularity of the choir at this time was due to two factors: first, the newly acquired 'royal' title, at times accompanied by the words 'under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen', served to validate the choir's musical endeavours and to reap economic benefits associated with such a title;<sup>78</sup> and second, the promise of a choir performing 'in national costume' was particularly appealing

<sup>76</sup> SMB stands for the Submarine Miners' Band.

<sup>77</sup> In aid of the Great Western Railway Servant's Widows and Orphans Benevolent Fund.

<sup>78</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 17 March 1894; 23 March 1894.

to audiences in England.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, the success of the choir in the wider field of music in the United Kingdom was further enhanced by its involvement with a series of Adelina Patti concerts held at the Royal Albert Hall in London and organised by the impresario Percy Harrison.<sup>80</sup> Born in Spain to Italian parents, Patti (1843–1919) was a soprano who had gained international success through singing in numerous noteworthy operas both abroad and in the United Kingdom. The choir appeared twice (19 May 1894 and 7 July 1894) within the series of eight concerts alongside solo vocal and instrumental performers.<sup>81</sup> Like its ‘royal’ title, the musical involvement of the choir with a renowned singer such as Patti would have further validated its public profile. Moreover, the reputation of the choir was further cemented at an international level when Clara escorted her choir to Paris to sing at the Paris Exhibition six years later.

### **Paris Exhibition: Gender and Class**

While the Chicago Eisteddfod allowed Welsh-Americans to assert their right to promote a native identity on one side of the Atlantic, the Paris Exhibition offered a different opportunity for musical exhibitionism on the other. The Paris Exhibition (or Exposition Universelle) was an international fair that took place between 15 April and 12 November 1900. Comparable to the Chicago World’s Fair, the Exhibition was designed to showcase cultural products of the world (including music, film, architecture and even wine) and several countries had their own representative pavilions. In terms of Welsh musical engagement, Clara notes that choirs from Wales received an invitation from the organisers of the Exhibition to ‘prove their excellence, if possible, in rivalry with the

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<sup>79</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 28 March 1894; 2 April 1894. *The Morning Post*, 28 April 1894.

<sup>80</sup> The repertoire performed in this series of concerts is not known.

<sup>81</sup> There were eleven Patti concerts performed at the Royal Albert Hall in total: three organized by Wilhelm Kuhe (1889–91) and eight by Harrison (1890–4). See AHRC Concert Programmes Database <<http://www.concertprogrammes.org.uk/html/search/verb/GetRecord/4201>> [accessed 15 June 2012]. The choir’s association here was not unnoticed in the press. In a brief article discussing the last Patti concert at the Royal Albert Hall, it was noted that while Madame Patti’s singing was ‘very attractive vocally’, the concert was ‘chiefly memorable for the sweet singing of the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir, and for the remarkable success achieved by a clever young violoncellist, M. Marix Loevensohn [1880–1943], from the Brussels Conservatoire’. *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 20 June 1896.



choristers of other great nations’.<sup>82</sup> Despite this assertion from Clara, contemporary accounts in the media suggested a more complicated reality. On 13 May 1900, Laurent de Rille (head of the Music Commission for the Exhibition) sent a letter to Paul Barbier (a Professor of French at Cardiff University) inquiring whether or not it would be possible to include Welsh choirs at the Exhibition. The suggestion was taken seriously. Accordingly, a conference was organised (nominally by the Mayor of Cardiff) to which representatives of a number of Welsh choirs were invited.



**Plate 5.4:** The Royal Welsh United Choir in Paris<sup>83</sup>

The conference committee concluded that it would be ‘desirable’ to be represented at the Paris Exhibition, and it suggested in particular that an international contest should be organised following the precedent set in Chicago. Here, it is clear that the relationship

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<sup>82</sup> Novello Davies, p.139.

<sup>83</sup> NLW: 1691 D.

between competitive spirit and communal singing in Wales was not only evident but was also an important factor to consider when representing musical practice outside of Wales. That being said, the organising committee did not follow the suggestion of arranging a contest. Instead, according to the programme, Welsh singers were afforded the opportunity to present a concert at the Trocadéro Hall on 25 July 1900. Here, the chosen Welsh singers were the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir, the aforementioned Rhondda Royal Glee Society (directed by Tom Stephens) and another male choir, the Barry District Glee Society (directed by David Farr). It is perhaps interesting to note that unlike many Welsh male voice choirs, these two did not include the word 'male' in their titles despite comprising exclusively of male choristers. Accordingly, the choirs travelled as a single party under the name 'The Royal United Welsh Choir' (see Plate 5.4).<sup>84</sup>

The notion of social class is particularly pertinent for a discussion of the Paris Exhibition. While musical experiences at international fairs were varied (promoting exposure to musical styles that were predominantly non-Western), Clara's interest was related to the fervour and vivacity of the French male choirs.<sup>85</sup> Here, the distinction between the social backgrounds of the choristers from France and those from Wales was observed by Clara. She stated: 'the French male choristers struck me as being of the bourgeoisie, and very different from our sturdy Welshmen, many of whom were miners'.<sup>86</sup> In this context, the collaboration between the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir and the Rhondda Glee Society enforced the notion that choral singing provided an opportunity to surpass class boundaries. Significantly, it is clear that Clara recognised that

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<sup>84</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Queen Victoria officially bestowed this encompassing title upon the mixed choir.

<sup>85</sup> In particular, 'exotic' music was of interest to many attending the fairs. For example, it has been well-documented that Claude Debussy (1862–1918) heard Javanese Gamelan for the first time at the previous Paris Exhibition (held in 1889), an influence which could be later heard in his compositions.

<sup>86</sup> Novello Davies, p.140.

N.B.—The Royal United Welsh Choir comprises the following Societies :—

(a) The Royal Welsh Ladies Choir	... ..	Mrs. Clara Novello Davies
(b) The Rhondda Royal Glee Society	... ..	Mr. Tom Stephens
(c) The Barry District Glee Society	... ..	Mr. David Farr

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"DUW CADWOR FRENHINES"—Solo  
"HEN WLAD FY NHADAU"—Solo

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1.—CHORUS	... ..	"Destruction of Gaza"	De Rille
		THE UNITED MALE VOICE CHOIR.	
2.—PART SONG	... ..	"Fair Land we greet thee"	Pinsuti
		THE ROYAL WELSH LADIES CHOIR.	
3.—PART SONG	... ..	"Yr Haf"	Gwilym Gwent
		THE UNITED CHOIR.	
4.—CHORUS	... ..	"The Pilgrims"	Joseph Parry
		THE UNITED MALE VOICE CHOIR.	
5.—WELSH AIRS...	... ..	{ (a) "Y Deryn Pur" (b) "Llwyn Oen" (c) "Clychan Aberdovey" }	Arr. by Emyln Evans
		THE ROYAL WELSH LADIES CHOIR.	
6.—PIANOFORTE SOLO	... ..	March ("Tannhäuser")	Wagner
		MISS MARIE WILLIAMS.	
7.—WELSH AIR	... ..	"March of the Men of Harlech"	B. Richards
		THE UNITED CHOIR.	
8.—DESCRIPTIVE PART SONG	... ..	"The Tyrol"	Ambrose Thomas
		THE RHONDDA ROYAL GLEE SOCIETY.	
9.—PART SONG	... ..	{ (a) "Day is at last departing" (b) "Spanish Gipsy" }	Raff Lassun
		THE ROYAL WELSH LADIES CHOIR.	
10.—PART SONG	... ..	"Martyrs of the Arena"	De Rille
		THE UNITED MALE VOICE CHOIR.	
11.—CHORUS	... ..	"Hallelujah"	Handel
		THE UNITED CHOIR.	
12.—NATIONAL ANTHEM OF FRANCE	... ..	"The Marseillaise"	
		THE UNITED CHOIR.	

Accompanists: Miss MARIE WILLIAMS (*Erand Gold Medalist*); Mr. DAVID JONES; Mr. JOHN LLOYD;  
At the Organ . . . . . Mr. DAVID JONES.

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If time permits, Songs will be given by the following Ladies and Gentlemen :

Misses GARNET, ANNIE BELL, MARY THOMAS, GERTRUDE WEDLAKE, MARY POWELL, ANNIE DAVIS,  
MADGE WATKINS, MARY JENKINS, AND ANNIE LEWIS.

Messrs. BEN DAVIES, W. REES, D. JONES, R.A.M., AND J. F. PROUD.

The Committee of the Royal United Welsh Choir desire to place on record their appreciation of the great kindness shown to them by M. MULRY, who very generously gave up his organ recital, fixed for the 25th July, in order that the singers of Wales might have the use of the Trocadero Hall on that day.

M. MULRY will give his recital on Friday, July 27th.

Hon. Secretaries: GWILYM HUGHES and D. W. EVANS.

**Plate 5.5:** Programme of the Royal Welsh United Choir at the Paris Exhibition, 1900<sup>87</sup>

the Welsh male choirs belonged to the working classes, a fact that distinguished them from their French equivalents. While the association of Tom Stephens' glee society with the mining trade was detailed in Chapter 4, there was also a connection between the Barry choir and industrial labour. For example, David Farr (n.d.), the choir's conductor, was

<sup>87</sup> 'Item 2: Welsh Choirs at the Exhibition', MS 892 E, NLW website <<http://digidol.llgc.org.uk>> [accessed 20 March 2013].

recognised as a 'working miner'.<sup>88</sup> By contrast, it should be remembered that members of Clara's choir tended to belong to a higher class. Moreover, it was suggested that Clara's choir might provide a model for the elevation of other choirs both in terms of musical standing and social status. As Oliver Williams stated in *The Outlook*:

A choir of ninety male voices recently sang [*Aberystwyth* by Joseph Parry] by command before Queen Victoria, who was greatly moved and commanded its repetition. These ninety men were mostly miners, who rarely saw the sun except on the Sabbath, but as singers they are as perfect artists as the 'Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir', who so lately charmed American audiences.<sup>89</sup>

The issue of repertoire in relation to performed identities is also pertinent here. For the Chicago Eisteddfod, as is customary in all *eisteddfodau*, test pieces were assigned for each competition. In contrast, the repertoire presented at the Paris Exhibition reflected a different sense of nationhood; the choirs were able to select their own songs, free from the restrictions of competitive regulations that prescribed test pieces. As the programme (Plate 5.5) indicates, the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir performed six pieces on its own and three as part of 'The United Choir'. Without the restrictions of test pieces, the repertoire performed by the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir was more closely linked with a sense of native identity than the programme presented in Chicago. This is highlighted especially by the inclusion of several items in the Welsh language (such as arrangements by D. Emlyn Evans of 'Y Deryn Pur', 'Llwyn Onn' and 'Clychau Aberdovey').<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the inclusion of Welsh language repertoire reflected a desire on the part of the festival organisers, de Rille's original invitation to the Exhibition calling for the Welsh to 'sing their national music in their national language'.<sup>91</sup>

That being said, one of the most interesting pieces featured in the programme is the 'March of the Men of Harlech' sung in English by the sizeable mixed choir. As I show

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<sup>88</sup> *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 1 September 1900.

<sup>89</sup> *The Outlook*, 25 January 1896 <<http://www.unz.org/Pub/Outlook-1896jan25-00169>> [accessed on 27 May 2012].

<sup>90</sup> The song titles are translated respectively as 'The Gentle Dove', 'Ash Grove' and 'The Bells of Aberdovey'.

<sup>91</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 26 May 1900.

in Chapter 1, this piece is especially associated with a Welsh construction of masculinity. The involvement of the female choir in this musical performance thus underscores the ways in which women were actively involved in a stereotypical representation of male identity in Wales for an international audience. Although the female choir performed collaboratively with male choirs here, it also performed this piece without the aural and visual accompaniment of male choristers. For example, it also performed the piece in a concert with the English contralto Clara Butt (1872–1936) at the Colston Hall in Bristol on 26 May 1897. Around 1914, the choir also produced a recording of the song (sung in English) accompanied by an orchestra.<sup>92</sup>

Despite the increase in Welsh repertoire (that is, in terms of language and subject matter), Clara was concerned about the nationalist aspect of her choir's performance with respect to performances made by other nations. She questioned: 'what a soulless performance must ours be in comparison? Should I impart a trifle more Celtic emphasis?'.<sup>93</sup> However, her doubt was groundless since the choir was awarded the Grand Prix for its efforts. In addition, Clara was presented with a gold wreath of laurel leaves (see Plate 5.6) placed on her head by the French composer Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921). She also received a Sèvres bowl (worth £80) as a gift from the French Government.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, her skills as a conductor made an impact in Paris. As it was reported in *The Musical Times*, a 'lady conductor was doubtless something of a novelty to the French folk'.<sup>95</sup> Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray (1840–1910), the President of the Paris Conservatoire, was one such person who was impressed by Clara. He reportedly commented: 'she possesse[d] the exquisite delicacy of feminine sentiment, and the energy indispensable for forcing her will on a large number. I have never heard such efforts of

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<sup>92</sup> NLW: Cell E4 838. Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir, *Ymdaith Gwŷr Harlech* ([s.l.]: Regal, c.1914). It should also be remembered that the same piece was featured as part of the 1899 recordings made by the Rhondda Glee Society.

<sup>93</sup> Novello Davies, p.140.

<sup>94</sup> In addition, Tom Stephens was presented with a gold shield and a gold medal. *Western Mail*, 24 July 1900.

<sup>95</sup> *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 1 September 1900.



choral interpretation [...] as those that she obtains'.<sup>96</sup> Accordingly, Clara was offered a position to teach at the Conservatoire but she declined.



**Plate 5.6:** Gold laurel leaf crown presented to Clara Novello Davies in 1900<sup>97</sup>

Having received recognition in the form of awards and congratulations in both Chicago and Paris, Clara and her female choir had acquired a reputation as a leading female choir on the international stage. As noted in this section, the choir provided a model for other choirs wanting to produce high-quality performances. Although the female choir distinguished itself in terms of gender and class from male choirs, it would forfeit its social status on return to Wales by performing in venues that were perceived to be less respectable.

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<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Novello Davies, p.142.

<sup>97</sup> St Fagans National History Museum: 43.64.3 (donated to the museum by Ivor Novello). Photograph by Rachelle Barlow.

## **Singing in the Halls: Music and Respectability**

The issue of respectability in the Victorian era is a topic that has been widely discussed by historians. At a time when class distinctions were extremely important, the process of both gaining and maintaining an elevated social position was especially significant for the Victorians. Andy Croll, a Welsh historian, importantly notes that it was the middle class in particular that was responsible for perpetuating such views; that is, in addition to their preoccupation with ‘civilizing’ the working class.<sup>98</sup> One system employed to reduce anti-social behaviour among the under privileged was the introduction of the temperance movement in 1835; the British Association for the Promotion of Temperance was formed with the aim of discouraging the consumption of alcohol and thus reducing drunkenness in the community. Religious leaders and religious followers keenly supported the temperance movement, and total abstinence was adopted by some hoping to better their moral grounding.

According to Croll, music was employed to aid the temperance movement because of its popularity and its ‘ability to bring different social constituencies together’.<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, music also possessed the ability to divide, rather than strengthen, the masses. This is particularly true of the music halls that developed in Britain throughout the nineteenth century. Although the term ‘music hall’ was not used for such venues until 1848, the idea of supporting social interaction while providing musical entertainment began decades earlier in the 1830s and 40s. Taverns in London acquired music licences in order to offer the working classes the opportunity to watch musical acts as they drank alcohol. Comparable to vaudeville theatres in America, this form of entertainment differed from previous theatrical experiences where seating was laid out in stalls and the bar was provided in a separate room. For the middle classes, who did not frequent the taverns, a similar idea was shown in so-called ‘song and supper clubs’ where men could

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<sup>98</sup> Andy Croll, *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture and Public Space in Merthyr, c.1870–1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp.4–5.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p.106.

enjoy hot food with popular accompaniments. Regardless of class, this form of entertainment was restricted to males only (a form reminiscent of the glee clubs discussed in Chapter 4). Such exclusivity regarding gender applied also to the majority of performers (until c.1880).

The words 'respectability' and 'music hall' were not often equated in the nineteenth century. In fact, behaviour in music halls often reflected few social and moral values; audiences 'could be very unruly often throwing things at the performers [...] and the orchestra [if present] was protected from the missiles by steel grilles'.<sup>100</sup> However, civic projectors recognised that this type of entertainment could be manipulated to promote respectability, and thus measures were taken to enforce this idea. In 1852, the impresario Charles Morton (1819–1904) constructed the first purpose-built music hall, the Canterbury Hall in Lambeth, which was large enough to seat 700 people. By way of encouraging the middle classes to attend, Morton did two things: first, he introduced 'Ladies' Thursdays' where men were allowed to accompany women to the hall; and second, he sought to raise the profile of the entertainment itself while placing less emphasis on drinking alcohol. In 1878, London County Council reinforced this abstinence by inserting a fire curtain and a proscenium arch. By separating the stage from the auditorium, liquor was to be restricted to the back of the hall.<sup>101</sup>

Although the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir had become well-established in the years between its formation and the turn of the twentieth century, its reputation was called into question when it became involved in the London music hall scene. Following her return from the Paris Exhibition, Clara received an invitation for her choir to perform in a month-long engagement at the Palace Theatre (of Varieties) in London from October (1900). Previously the failed Royal English Opera house, the Palace Theatre had been converted into a variety theatre by the English architect Walter Emden (1847–1913) in

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<sup>100</sup> 'The Story of the Music Hall: The Origins of Music Hall', Victoria and Albert Museum website <<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-story-of-music-halls/>> [accessed 20 October 2012].

<sup>101</sup> Andrew Lamb, 'Music Hall', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>> [accessed 21 October 2012].



1892. Morton came out of retirement to manage the hall, by which time he had gained a reputation as ‘father of the halls’. At first, Clara wished to decline the offer due to the negative reputation associated with music halls at that time. Rather than simply refusing, however, she named an exaggerated performance fee that she was sure Morton would refuse. To her surprise, he accepted her proposal and Clara began to prepare her singers to perform in the London hall. That being said, Clara’s newly-found enthusiasm for the venture (despite her initial caution) was not shared by all members of the choir. In particular, some were concerned about the ensuing reaction of their family members who were staunchly religious. Significantly, important members of the choir resigned over such apprehensions.<sup>102</sup>

On 23 October 1900, Clara’s choir gave the first performance of its six-week run at the Palace Theatre in London.<sup>103</sup> Arranged in three rows of ten performers, the choir was received enthusiastically by the audience for its limited programme which comprised of the Welsh airs ‘Llwyn Onn’ and ‘Clychau Aberdovey’ (both arrangements by Emlyn Evans as before), Lassen’s ‘The Spanish Gipsy Girl’, ‘The Keel Row’ (a folk song associated with Tyneside in the North of England) and the patriotic British anthem, ‘Rule, Britannia’ (performed here as an *encore*). According to the London-based newspaper *The Standard*, ‘high-class glee singing’ had become customary at the Palace and the reception afforded to the female choir ‘plainly showed that this form of entertainment is as keenly

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<sup>102</sup> Novello Davies, p.143.

<sup>103</sup> Although the initial proposal detailed that the choir would perform at the hall for a month, it was actually engaged for six weeks. In terms of music hall performances, it is worth noting that the choir performed also at music halls outside of London. In the week prior to the performances in London, the choir appeared at the Music Hall in Chester. Significant for the discussion on respectability, the event was attended by a number of important patrons, such as R. A. Yerburgh (M.P.), the High Sheriff, the Mayor and Mayoress, the Sheriff, G. A. Dickson, Col. Evans-Lloyd and Dr. J. Roberts. According to *Cheshire Observer*, ‘every member of the large audience must have been delighted with the excellent treatment which each item received’. See *Cheshire Observer*, 20 October 1900. In addition to this appearance in Cheshire, the choir was seemingly contacted to appear at the Music Hall in Leeds in the same month. According to a contemporary press account, a ‘well-known music hall manager in Leeds [had] concluded an arrangement with the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir, which [would perform...] two turns each evening [... of] part-songs and choruses’. Since the article was entitled ‘The Elevation of the Music Hall’, it is suggested that the inclusion of a female choir in this performance context would aid the desire of the organisers to raise the social profile, and thus the respectability, of relevant establishments in Leeds. That being said, further details about the performances are not available in other press accounts (or in Clara’s autobiography), suggesting perhaps that this new venture in Leeds did not come to fruition. See *The Bury and Norwich Post*, and *Suffolk Standard*, 16 October 1900.

appreciated by the public as ever'.<sup>104</sup> In a similar vein, *The Morning Post* asserted that members of the choir had 'every reason to be satisfied with themselves'.<sup>105</sup> Notions about class and respectability continued to inform discussions about 'popular' music performed in music halls.

Regarding respectability, the musicologist Derek Scott importantly notes that while the concept 'allowed the bourgeoisie to take a moral stand against certain aspects of working-class behaviour, especially drink and immorality', it could not be enforced from a top-down perspective.<sup>106</sup> Instead, he argues that it must function as part of a consensus involving a persuasion of the working classes. While schemes such as tonic sol-fa in music and the temperance movement in religion sought to improve the morality of the lower orders, the middle classes needed persuading in other areas (such as their attendance at music halls). Here, figures like Morton did much to alter their perception of music halls not only by encouraging (married) women to attend (as mentioned) but also by contracting professional or semi-professional musicians to perform in place of amateurs. However, perceptions about prostitution in music halls (in addition to the consumption of alcohol) were often engrained in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Such thoughts rendered any efforts to improve the moral standing of the performance context 'meaningless [...] if the entertainment was respectable but the venue not'.<sup>107</sup>

It was precisely these types of views that coloured the Welsh reception of the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir's association with the music hall in London. In a bid to win support from the local communities in Cardiff, the *Western Mail* published a report about the transformation of music halls from 'vulgarity to palaces of artistic recreation', and the role of the Welsh female choir in such transformation.<sup>108</sup> Further, it is stated that: 'a greater demonstration of satisfaction has [...] never happened at the Palace in the opinion

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<sup>104</sup> *The Standard*, 24 October 1900.

<sup>105</sup> *The Morning Post*, 24 October 1900.

<sup>106</sup> Derek Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois: Songs of the Victorian Drawing Room and Parlour*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p.216.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p.218.

<sup>108</sup> *Western Mail*, 24 October 1900.

of those officially connected with it'.<sup>109</sup> Despite such praise, members in the locality were not easily persuaded about the changed nature of music halls, and Clara was treated coldly when she attended a service at her usual chapel. She reflected:

I should also have taken Charles Morton along to show the deacons and others, for with his snowy hair and fatherly demeanour he could have passed for an amiable bishop who was just managing a music-hall as an evangelical experiment. This would have gone a long way towards preventing or allaying any suspicions about his respectability or mine [...] scarcely a soul deigned to notice us. I was made to feel that I was a brand very much in the process of burning, and apparently no-one there wished to scorch their fingers by contact. To them I had degraded our native Wales by having its sweet songs sung in a music-hall.<sup>110</sup>

It is clear that Clara did not feel fairly represented for her appearances in a London music hall. Since the choir's repertoire continued to include items in the Welsh language, she believed that this new context for the promotion of Welsh nationhood that was not fully appreciated in Cardiff.

However in other areas of performance, the advancement of Welshness was not so clearly displayed. An example of this is concert dress. Despite wearing the national costume (a selling-point that was used extensively for promotional purposes), the choir did not wear the national costume for the music hall appearances. Here, the distinction between the earlier sartorial precedent and the contemporary performances was keenly observed by a reporter for *The Morning Post* (a London-based newspaper). S/he stated: 'one would have liked it better had they worn the national costume in which they have appeared elsewhere'.<sup>111</sup> Instead, they wore 'pale blue, pale pink and heliotrope sashes' (colours not related to Wales) over white dresses.<sup>112</sup> Concert dress was not the only area that was altered by the choir's appearances in London. Repertoire, in particular, was adapted to include British patriotic songs to reflect a performed identity that would

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Novello Davies, pp.145–6.

<sup>111</sup> *The Morning Post*, 24 October 1900. 'God Save the Queen', a piece that the choir performed for the Queen in 1894, was also frequently performed in concert venues (including music halls) in Wales and in England. Moreover, both 'God Save the Queen' and 'Rule, Britannia' were performed (the former as an *encore*) at the aforementioned concert at the Music Hall in Chester. See *Cheshire Observer*, 20 October 1900.

<sup>112</sup> *Western Mail*, 24 October 1900.

appeal especially to audiences in England. Here, British (rather than Welsh) musical items were performed as encores; for example, when ‘Rule, Britannia’ was performed at the opening night, requests by ‘some of [the choir’s] countrymen for this song or that’ (that is, songs from Wales) were disregarded.<sup>113</sup>

## Conclusions

The case study of the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir has shown not only that female choirs existed in Wales before the turn of the twentieth century, but also that this choir in particular was both active and successful in the international arena. From this perspective, I contend that historical accounts of choral singing that do not feature a consideration of female participants are somewhat misleading. To reinforce my point, it should be remembered that Gareth Williams’ seminal publication on Welsh choirs (1840–1914) features nominal information on the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir despite its successes at home and abroad. Although surpassing the timeframe of Williams’ monograph, Clara’s choir continued to be active into the late 1930s. As this chapter has shown, there is another point to be made here about gender: this female choir acted as a model for male choirs in terms of aspiration (‘as perfect artists as the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir’) and also in terms of achievement (Clara’s choir was the first Welsh choir to receive a royal status).

In terms of identity, I show how Clara chose to represent her singers in peasant costume, an image that conflicted with the choir’s social membership yet promoted a visual symbol of nationhood. Significantly, this form of national identity was unique since an equivalent did not exist for men. In addition to gender distinctions, this chapter also explored the place of social class with respect to choral performance, distinguishing between a middle-class female choir (the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir) and a working-class male choir (the Rhondda Glee Society). While this difference is relevant, I contend that

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<sup>113</sup> *The Morning Post*, 24 October 1900.

social status and social respectability were not synonymous, with the latter being dependent upon a number of factors. Although nominally bourgeois, performers who appeared in music halls could lose their social respectability, by associating with performance contexts with perceived low moral standing. In the next chapter, I will examine further the concepts of gender and class by looking at a female choir (directed by Hannah Hughes-Thomas) which was active in the first decades of the twentieth century.

## Chapter Six

### Performed Femininities: Women of Harlech

This chapter seeks to dispel further the notion that female participation in choral singing in Wales was rare in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Focussing upon the musical practices of women, it will interrogate the ways in which concepts of femininity were constructed socially and performed musically in choral performances. While the previous chapter explored the notion of performed femininities with reference to a single choir that gained both a national and an international reputation, namely Clara Novello Davies' Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir, 'the extent to which this ensemble represented female choral singing in Wales must be questioned. Was Clara's choir an exceptional example? Or were other female choirs active in the same period? To answer such questions, this chapter will draw upon a range of personal and published ethnographic sources to assess both the popularity and the reception of another Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir, led by Hannah Hughes-Thomas. Unlike Clara Novello Davies, Hannah Hughes-Thomas left few primary source materials: I was unable to locate any personal memoirs, details of her performed repertoire or recordings of her choir.

The chapter is structured in the following manner. First, I consider musical participation on a national level by considering how women were involved in higher education at Welsh universities in the late nineteenth century. Second, moving from the national to the local sphere, I examine how choral singing, which was part of a wider national consciousness, was conceptualised within a local framework; the case study here is Maesteg, home of Hannah Hughes-Thomas. Third, I uncover details concerning the formation of a second Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir. Here, the relationship between social class, language and politics is especially critiqued in relation to Hannah Hughes-Thomas and her husband Edward Thomas. Fourth, I provide an alternative bottom-up reading of the female choir by analysing sections of a diary

written by 19-year-old Elizabeth Clement who sang with the Hughes-Thomas choir on the American tour (1911).

## A Musical Education for Women?

Wales, as most people know, has had a long and glorious history in regard to [male voice choirs]. And it speaks volumes for the ability, patience and industry of its inhabitants – workers above-ground and below-ground – that they have won so much fame in this direction.<sup>1</sup>

In 1946, J. Sutcliffe Smith penned the above words in a letter to a Yorkshireman called Keith Conyers as part of an ongoing conversation about Smith's *Impressions of Music in Wales*. In particular, Smith, an Englishman and a Doctor of Music, was reflecting upon his experiences at the National Eisteddfod held in Mountain Ash in August 1946. He commented further: 'here were men from the field, the mine and the quarry – hefty fellows whose broad chests and sinewy frames told their own story. It was delightful to know that music was the solace and joy of these toilers'.<sup>2</sup> Smith's observations on the Welsh choral tradition seemingly invoke and confirm a stereotype linked to gender (male) and class (working class) as discussed in the chapter on male glee singing in Wales (Chapter 4). But how true was this, especially in terms of gender? Were women not afforded the same opportunities to perform or compete? Or was it that their participation did not command the same fame? And, if so, why not? Moreover, was the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir an exception?

As discussed in Chapter 1, an account of the Welsh choral tradition was written by the William R. Allen as part of an edited collection simply titled *Music in Wales* (published in the same year as the Smith letters, 1948). Here, Allen reports sparingly on the success of both male and female choirs. He states: 'male voice choirs, are numerous, for instance, like those at Dowlais and Morriston; and the success of ladies' choirs is shown in the activities of those of Caernarvon,

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<sup>1</sup> J. Sutcliffe Smith, 'Letter XXIX', in *Impressions of Music in Wales* (Penmaenmawr: Venture Press, 1948), p.119. The correspondence between Smith and Conyers was initiated on 20 May 1946, but unfortunately the proceeding 36 letters are undated. This publication contains only the letters written by Smith.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

and Neath and District'.<sup>3</sup> However, since Allen provides only this singular sentence on the gendered nature of choral singing in Wales, he fails both to explore the differences between the two types of choirs (male and female) and to comment upon the status of male choirs that was so apparent to Smith. Here, male and female choirs are seemingly afforded the same status.

William Allen, a native of Dolgellau in North Wales, was suitably qualified to comment in general upon the choral tradition in Wales; a trained baritone and organist, he worked as Lecturer in Voice Production at Aberystwyth University from 1919 until his death in 1956. In addition to his duties as the organist of St Michael's Church, Aberystwyth, he also led the university's choral society, which, he notes, 'managed to continue activity despite the absence of many of its male voices during the [Second World] War'.<sup>4</sup>

The university movement in Wales played an important role in the encouragement and development of the Welsh choral tradition. Music provision at Aberystwyth was somewhat turbulent in the late nineteenth century. In 1874, Joseph Parry was appointed as Professor of Music, yet six years later music was struck off the rolls. A musical society was formed in 1884 and its first series of annual concerts was inaugurated in March 1885. However, participation within this choral society was restricted to males in the initial years until females were admitted to the choir in 1886.<sup>5</sup> The choral society at Bangor University was also founded in 1884, although it has been noted that the choir 'was not first well attended', but later flourished under the directorship of J. Lloyd Williams (1854–1945).<sup>6</sup> Choral culture at Cardiff University,<sup>7</sup> founded in 1883 (the year that Clara's female choir was established in the city), was developed initially by

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<sup>3</sup> W. R. Allen, 'The Choral Tradition in Wales', in Peter Crossley-Holland (ed.), *Music in Wales* (London: Hinrichsen, 1948), p.36.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp.35–6. Allen, too, had been involved in military action. Although trained at the Royal College of Music in London (gaining an ARCM diploma for singing in 1913 and securing funding for further study in singing and organ playing in 1914), Allen volunteered to become a Warrant Officer for the Royal Navy Armoured Car Division in 1915. Over the next four years, Allen served in the Caucasus, Iran, Baku, Rostov, Constanza and Basra. Upon his return to the UK in 1919, Allen was appointed to his post in Aberystwyth. See 'W. R. Allen', Tank Museum website <<http://tankmuseum.org/museum-online/medals/recipient/B351>> [accessed 10 January 2015].

<sup>5</sup> Iwan Morgan (ed.), 'The Music Department and Musical Activities, 1874–1927', in *The College by the Sea* (Aberystwyth: Cambrian News, 1928), p.191.

<sup>6</sup> J. Gwynn Williams, *The University College of North Wales Foundations, 1884–1927* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1985), p.315.

<sup>7</sup> Cardiff University was originally named the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire.



John Morgan Lloyd (1880–1960), and subsequently by David Evans (1874–1948) and Joseph Morgan (n.d., taught at the institution between 1939 and 1967).<sup>8</sup>

While notions of gendered performance practices are not particularly forthcoming with respect to choral singing within the university setting, such issues can be addressed by considering other activities. For example, the inclusion of contests for female choirs at *eisteddfodau* provides an interesting framework for further interrogating the concept that Welsh female choral singing is seemingly considered inferior to its male counterpart. Returning to the letters of J. Sutcliffe Smith, he later admits that ‘male voice choirs and mixed choirs [...] might be considered the “big noise” of Welsh choralism’.<sup>9</sup> Still, he notes that female choirs were also present at the Mountain Ash Eisteddfod (1946):

The ladies in their contests showed a brave sporting spirit. I often thought as I listened to them how sensitive their efforts proved in such matters as beauty of blend and accuracy of pitch. One voice going astray might serve to mar an otherwise delightful performance. In a word, *every* voice must be properly tuned – in to get the desired effect. Of course in all choirs this is the great desideratum, but in my opinion weak places in female quarters and trios have a knack of showing themselves with startling prominence. [...] And what striking effects they produced as they took their places on the platform! In this they showed a decided superiority on the male voice groupings.<sup>10</sup>

While Smith openly compares male and female choirs in the latter part of his observation, his notes on vocal quality and production are also noteworthy in terms of a gendered reading. In his description of the male choirs (Letter XXIX), he states: ‘if some harshness was at times perceivable this was due to the conditions associated with the contest rather than through a lack of musicalness [...] At times one longed for a well sustained diminuendo and more perfect

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<sup>8</sup> In particular, John Morgan Lloyd is a pertinent figure in relation to this thesis. Although born at Pentre in the Rhondda Valleys, Lloyd and his family moved to Barry in 1889. Lloyd was musically talented from a young age and was appointed as the accompanist for the Barry District Glee Society while he was a pupil at Lewis School in Pengam. In 1900, he was accompanist for the aforementioned Royal Welsh United Choir at the Paris Exhibition (see Chapter 5). He began studying Music at Cardiff University in 1904, and was appointed there as a lecturer in 1920, and later as a professor, a post he held until his retirement in 1945. See Huw Williams, ‘Lloyd, John Morgan’, Dictionary of Welsh Biography <[wbo.llgc.org.uk](http://wbo.llgc.org.uk)> [accessed 7 January 2015].

<sup>9</sup> Smith, ‘Letter XXX’, p.121.

<sup>10</sup> Smith, ‘Letter XXX’, p.121.

control'.<sup>11</sup> However, such shortcomings were apparently not substantial enough for him to critique in line with the sustained reputation of male choirs in Wales.

### **'Blodau yr Oes' and Bridgend's Beethoven House**

'Blodau yr oes' rose to their feet, and sang 'Y Deryn Pur' (Emlyn Evans) with a precision that was machine-like and a harmony that was ideally tuneful. The slowly rising and falling cadences glided into the ear with that soothing sense of rapture that is so idyllic on a summery eve. The audience cheered vociferously [...].<sup>12</sup>

At the seventh annual concert performed by the students of Beethoven House, a Mr T. L. Roberts solicited order from the audience for the debut performance of '*blodau yr oes*' (English, 'flowers of the time'), a recently-formed female choir.<sup>13</sup> The singers, who were dressed predominantly in white with an occasional hint of pale blue or pale pink, were positioned on an 'improvised stage' at Maesteg Town Hall. Here, rows of singers stood 'rising tier above tier till distance became enchanting to the view'; an observation which suggests that the ensemble featured many choristers.<sup>14</sup> Although the concert also included performances by smaller ensembles, such as a piano duet by Miss Maggie Evans and Miss Mary Williams and a number of songs performed by D. Howells (n.d., known also as 'Gwyn Alaw'), a renowned tenor from Ferndale.<sup>15</sup> The choir was the chief focus for the evening concert. A report in the local press explained: 'this is an event that has been regarded with an increasing amount of public favour every year since its inauguration [in 1888], but this year the interest evinced in it was exceptionally keen in that the Maesteg Ladies' Choral Society was announced to make its *debut* before the public'.<sup>16</sup> But why was a female choir anticipated in such a way?

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<sup>11</sup> Smith, 'Letter XXIX', p.119.

<sup>12</sup> Glamorgan Archives: DLOV/170, Edward Loveluck Papers. 'Maesteg School of Music Annual Concert: First Appearance of the New Choir', *Glamorgan Gazette*. The date of this newspaper report is handwritten as April 1895. However, the full citation has been unable to be found.

<sup>13</sup> '*Blodau yr oes*' was a term used by Roberts to describe the choir. There is no evidence to suggest that this was its official name.

<sup>14</sup> Glamorgan Archives: DLOV/170, Edward Loveluck Papers, *Glamorgan Gazette*, April 1895.

<sup>15</sup> There is a link with Caradog since Gwyn Alaw was a member of Caradog's Côr Mawr. The reunion invitation reproduced in Chapter 3 (Plate 3.4) is addressed personally to Gwyn Alaw.

<sup>16</sup> Glamorgan Archives: DLOV/170, Edward Loveluck Papers, *Glamorgan Gazette*, [n.d.] April 1895.

A likely answer could be linked to the choir's conductor, Miss Hannah Hughes (b.1864). A native of Maesteg, a mining area situated on the north-western border of the Llynfi Valley in Bridgend, Hannah was raised in a working-class family. Her grandfather Richard (1779–1835) relocated to the area from Tredegar, where he had worked as a miner, with his wife (also called Hannah) and his son (also called Richard, henceforth called Richard II). Although he did not receive any formal education, Richard I possessed skills in literacy, was deeply interested in theology and was considered to be an 'expert on the Bible'.<sup>17</sup> His son, Richard II (1820–1885), was also heavily influenced by religion. Despite this, Richard II convinced his father to return to manual work after the family's relocation, and the pair worked together at a local colliery in Maesteg. However, the partnership was short-lived since Richard I suffered from a fatal rock fall, the shock of which prompted Richard II to cease mining in favour of pursuing his religious interests; he trained for the ministry and became a well-known preacher in the ministry of Bethania from 1851.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to preaching, music played a key role in the success of Richard II, increasing his appeal to his congregation, whose numbers rose dramatically. A report detailing the historic building of Bethania Chapel notes that 'Richard Hughes was a charismatic leader who established Whit Sunday and preaching festivals along with dramatic and choral performances as popular activities for the congregation'.<sup>19</sup> Although it is unclear whether Richard himself possessed musical skill, his daughter Hannah (Plate 6.1), the aforementioned conductor of the Maesteg Ladies' Choral Society, was musically talented from a young age. According to the Edward Loveluck papers held at Glamorgan Archives, Hannah was successful in a number of *eisteddfodau*, although further details have not been forthcoming. Her musical talent was both well-established and well-known by the time of the debut concert for the ladies' choir in 1895. She was described

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<sup>17</sup> Glamorgan Archives: DLOV/170, Edward Loveluck Papers, 'Notes on the Hughes Family of Bridgend and Maesteg'.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Richard's role as a preacher has been recorded in Welsh in a publication written by Dr J. Rowlands of Llanelli. See J. Rowlands, *Cofiant y Parch, R. Hughes, Maesteg, yn nghyd a rhai o bregethau diwedddaf* (Maesteg: James James, 1886).

<sup>19</sup> 'Bethania Capel y Bedyddwyr Neillduol: Archaeological Building Investigation and Recording', Welsh Buildings Religious Trust <[www.welshchapels.org](http://www.welshchapels.org)> [accessed 12 January 2015].

as ‘one of the most polished pianists in the district’, a fact that ‘was a sufficient guarantee that the combination of lady vocalists would give a good account of themselves’ according to one report in the press.<sup>20</sup>

However, the reputation of Hannah Hughes was not limited to verbal exchanges in the local community. Hannah had received formal recognition of her musical skill in the form of a diploma from the Royal College of Music in London, and was thus permitted to use the post-nominal letters ARCM (Associate of the Royal College of Music) when promoting the activities of her choir. Such letters served not only to validate the acquisition of her musical skill from a reputable institution in the public sphere, but also to signify that she was suitably qualified for her role as Principal of the local music academy. Maesteg School of Music, or Beethoven House as it was more popularly known, was established at 81–83 Castle Street in 1888 by Hannah herself. Six years later, a collegiate school was introduced in Beethoven House, with pupils being educated in English in connection with the Society of Science, Letters and Art, an institute established in Kensington, London by Dr Edward Albert Sturman in 1882.

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<sup>20</sup> Glamorgan Archives: DLOV/170, Edward Loveluck Papers, *Glamorgan Gazette*, [n.d.] April 1895.



**Plate 6.1:** Hannah Hughes<sup>21</sup>

In addition to tuition in English, the collegiate school also offered tuition in music: ‘the students at the school enjoy the privileges of a high class musical education, being under the personal supervision of the Principal, Miss Hughes, whose phenomenal success in the art of musical culture is already known’.<sup>22</sup> Here, a division in social class becomes apparent. As I show elsewhere, instruction in ‘high class’ education was restricted to those who could afford the privilege; music lessons, in particular, were socially desirable yet financially burdensome. However, the education offered was not limited to elementary concepts and the rudiments of music. Following the precedent of their music teacher and Principal of the academy, pupils were afforded the opportunity to gain national recognition through formal music qualifications. For example, in June 1891, 22 pupils successfully completed examinations for the London College of Music (LCM) and five passes were awarded for the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal

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<sup>21</sup> NLW: AFF 49.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Maesteg Collegiate School’, *Glamorgan Gazette*, 4 January 1895.

College of Music examinations; such successes were deemed 'highly credible to Miss Hughes'.<sup>23</sup>

The following month, ten further pupils sat examinations at the Cardiff examination centre for the LCM, where five junior passes and five junior honours were awarded.<sup>24</sup>

In terms of social class, performances by the aforementioned Maesteg Ladies' Choral Society, a choir comprised of the school's female students, were representative of elevated members of the community. The juxtaposition of a working-class community sustained by mining industries and a musical ensemble endowed with financial resources is demonstrated through the choice of venue for the concert. Maesteg Town Hall, now a Grade II listed building, was designed by a Cardiff architect named Henry Harris (n.d.). The building of his design, a four-storey structure including both a performance space and a market hall, began in October 1880 with a local MP (namely C. R. M. Talbot) laying the first foundation stone. However, the project's funding is noteworthy in terms of social class and artistic sponsorship. In addition to £500 donated by Talbot, the remaining sum required to build the venue was raised by local miners who agreed to forfeit a day's wage to support the venture.<sup>25</sup> Here, unlike other instances where coal owners provided the means to support recreational activities, the hall was funded principally by the workers themselves. Since completion in 1881, the Town Hall has acted not only as a cultural hub for the community (with musical and dramatic performances being performed regularly) but has also played an important social role as it provided a space for discussing communal matters.

While Hannah Hughes took advantage of the recently-established Town Hall as the venue for the annual concert, performances by the female choir were not limited to the local area. On 11 April 1896, a succinct paragraph in the *London Kelt* (a newspaper intended for members of the London-Welsh community amongst others as its name suggests) detailed that Miss Hughes intended to take her choir to compete in the ladies' contest at the National Eisteddfod, which

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<sup>23</sup> *Evening Express*, 1 June 1891.

<sup>24</sup> *South Wales Star*, 28 August 1891.

<sup>25</sup> 'Maesteg Town Hall: Our History', Maesteg Town Hall website <[www.maestegtownhall.com/our-history](http://www.maestegtownhall.com/our-history)> [accessed 13 January 2015].

was to be hosted in Llandudno (a coastal town in North Wales) that summer.<sup>26</sup> However, there was one noticeable change regarding the choir in contrast to its earlier appearances in Maesteg: its name. Here, the choir is referred to as the Gwalia Ladies' Choir.<sup>27</sup> While it could be suggested that this was, in fact, an entirely different choir, it is unlikely that Hannah would have set up an additional female choir in the district considering the '*blodau yr oes*' (mentioned above) made their debut just one year earlier.

In addition to the Gwalia Ladies' Choir, the female choral contest at the Llandudno Eisteddfod had five other competitors: the Gwent Ladies' Choir (conductor unknown), the London Cymric Ladies' Choir (conducted by Mrs Frances Rees), the Dyffryn Clwyd Ladies' Choir (conducted by Miss E. M. H. Jones, daughter of Archdeacon Jones of St Asaph), the Birkenhead Gitana<sup>28</sup> Ladies' Choir (conducted by Miss Maggie Evans) and Pontypridd Ladies' Choir (conducted by Mr T. H. Madock – the only male conductor for this competition).<sup>29</sup> Emlyn Evans, one of the adjudicators for the contest, reportedly noted that the competition prize lay between the choirs from Birkenhead and London. Interestingly, of all the competitors, these were the only two choirs not residing in Wales. While he commented that his arrangement of 'Llwyn Onn' (performed also by Clara's choir) was rendered in a 'perfect' manner by the London choristers, their performance of the second, more difficult test piece – Schubert's 'God in Nature' – was flawed by intonation and timing.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, the latter piece was rendered more successfully by the Birkenhead choir and thus the first prize of £25 (donated by Lever Brothers of Port Sunlight) and a silver medal was awarded to them; a second prize of £7 (from the Eisteddfod committee) was claimed by the London Cymric Choir.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the conductors of both choirs received prizes from the Bishop of Bangor.

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<sup>26</sup> *London Kelt*, 11 April 1896.

<sup>27</sup> 'Gwalia' is an archaic name for Wales, deriving from the Latin word 'Wallia', which was itself linked to the English word 'Wales'.

<sup>28</sup> '*Gitana*' is the Spanish word for a female gypsy. The choir later removed the word '*gitana*' from its title.

<sup>29</sup> *Denbighshire Free Press*, 4 July 1896; *Llandudno Advertiser*, 9 July 1896.

<sup>30</sup> *London Kelt*, 11 July 1896.

<sup>31</sup> Lever Brothers was a British manufacturing company founded by William Hesketh Lever (1851–1925) and his brother James Darcy Lever (1854–1910) in 1885. In particular, the company manufactured soap by exploiting a new

The achievement of the London choristers was particularly notable since the choir, presumably recently-formed, had given its first public performance just one month prior to the Eisteddfod at the Holborn Town Hall in London. Considering the results of the contest in Llandudno, a review of the concert in the *London Kelt* is less than complimentary about the choir. The writer, 'Pedr Alaw' (Peter Edwards, 1854–1934) criticised:<sup>32</sup>

The Eisteddfod test piece 'God in Nature' (Schubert) is so difficult and 'Llwyn Onn' so easy that I had expected an indifferent rendering of the former and a good reading of the latter but not so, 'Llwyn Onn' was not sung to my satisfaction. That most essential thing in choral singing, a true blending of the parts, was wanting. [...] The fault is not [the conductor] Miss Rees [...] but] some lack of sympathy between the various voices.<sup>33</sup>

In this instance, the voices had been drawn from a number of established London Welsh choirs.

In addition to this criticism, Pedr Alaw suggested that the choir would be improved if all members frequently attended rehearsals, adapted their voices to create a more blended sound and learned the test pieces thoroughly enough to sing without copies; the latter suggestion indicates that members of the choir were musically literate since scores were being used at the concert.

Perhaps the success of the choir at the Llandudno Eisteddfod was due to such a critique.

Nevertheless Pedr Alaw penned an entirely different report following the contest calling the choir 'highly distinguished' and noting its 'electric' performance of 'Llwyn Onn', a marked contrast from his earlier observations.<sup>34</sup> The difference between the two press reports is staggering, and conceivably indicates how the media, in general, was utilised or manipulated in relation to competition entries and winners. For example, the involvement in this contest of Hannah

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formula developed by William Henry Watson. Moreover, the Lever Brothers constructed a village named Port Sunlight (referring to their popular product, Sunlight soap) to accommodate those working at their soap factory (which later became part of the global brand Unilever). The village is located on the Wirral Peninsula.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Edwards was born in Flintshire, North Wales. Although he showed talent in music from a young age, learning tonic sol-fa as a member of a chapel choir, he was employed principally in non-musical settings; he worked for a timber merchant in Rhyl before moving to Liverpool in 1872. After five years in Liverpool, he moved to London to become a shorthand writer for a timber merchant firm. In his spare time, however, he conducted choirs, composed music and wrote music criticism for the *London Kelt*. He later emigrated to the United States, where he completed a Bachelor's degree in Music in Toronto and entered the Anglican ministry. See Robert David Griffith, 'Edwards, Peter (Percy)', Dictionary of Welsh Biography <[www.yba.llgc.org.uk](http://www.yba.llgc.org.uk)> [accessed 13 January 2015].

<sup>33</sup> *London Kelt*, 20 June 1896.

<sup>34</sup> *London Kelt*, 11 July 1896.



Hughes' choir, the Gwalia Ladies' Choir, does not seem to appear in the local press in either Maesteg or Bridgend. In this manner, the successful reputation of the choir is maintained despite it failing to achieve a prize at the National Eisteddfod.

The participation of female choirs at national *eisteddfodau* is an interesting phenomenon in itself. Until the Rhyl National Eisteddfod held in 1892, one year before the Chicago Eisteddfod at the World's Fair, a category dedicated specifically to female choral singing at Wales' annual cultural festival did not exist. Although females were permitted to compete in solo categories and as members of mixed choirs in previous years, the Rhyl Eisteddfod Committee was the first to encourage choirs composed exclusively of women to compete. For the inaugural contest in 1892, the first prize was awarded to the Birkenhead Ladies' Choir, which also won the title at the Carnarvon National Eisteddfod in 1894 and at the Llandudno Eisteddfod in 1896 (as mentioned).<sup>35</sup> At the Llandudno Eisteddfod, the notion of female choirs was discussed by one of the other adjudicators, Mr C. F. Lloyd (1852–1917).<sup>36</sup> He stated: 'Wales had long been famous for its male voice choirs, and that latterly the ladies [were] determined not to let the sterner sex have all their own way'.<sup>37</sup> Despite adjudicating this category, the comments of Mr Lloyd seem to suggest an unequal balance between male and female choirs as he remarks that the females 'did not fall far short' of the other (meaning male) choirs in terms of excellence.<sup>38</sup> However, he does praise the so-called 'New Woman movement' for increasing the number of female conductors. Here, it must be remembered that Clara Novello Davies formed her female choir in 1883, eleven years prior to the establishment of female choral competition at the National Eisteddfod.

The introduction of the female choral category at the Rhyl Eisteddfod did not relate only to the participation of women in the arts. In March of the same year, a meeting was held at the Town Hall in Rhyl for the purpose of establishing a Women's Liberal Association in the local

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<sup>35</sup> *Denbighshire Free Press*, 4 July 1896.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Francis Lloyd was a pianist and organist, who had also completed qualifications at the Tonic Sol-fa College (in particular, the associate and licentiate diplomas). Like his father, John Ambrose Lloyd (1815–1874), Charles was also a composer. See Robert David Griffiths, 'Lloyd, Charles Francis', *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* <wbo.llgc.org.uk> [accessed 10 January 2015].

<sup>37</sup> *Denbighshire Free Press*, 4 July 1896.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

area. The meeting was prompted by the recognition that several influential women had greatly assisted the Liberal party in the recent County Council elections, and that women in general should be offered the opportunity to become formally involved in political affairs. A local newspaper reported:

The right of women to enter the political arena, and to display an interest in imperial legislation and local administration, is no longer contested by anyone. The dogma that woman should forever be kept within the confines of her own house, and never raise her voice or to battle for the rights that want assistance, and the wrongs that need resistance, is now a thing of the past.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the inclusion of phrases such as ‘no longer contested’ and ‘thing of the past’, it was anticipated that some opponents to the proposed agenda might be present at the meeting. Here, opposing views were permitted for the purpose of ‘agitation and discussion’, although people airing such views were encouraged to remain ‘sufficiently chivalrous and generous to grant the speakers and promoters the utmost indulgence and courtesy’.<sup>40</sup>

The location and timing of the Rhyl Eisteddfod was thus significant in terms of recognising and promoting the social role of women; societies such as the Women’s Liberal Association and choirs comprised solely of female voices both afforded women a voice, a chance to be heard socially on a par with their male counterparts. Despite this major development, however, news of the new *eisteddfod* category was not wholly highlighted in press. In a lengthy statement from the Eisteddfod Committee regarding timetable arrangements and other formalities, there was a single sentence written to address the matter: ‘during the concert on [the fourth] day, there will be a competition by choirs of female voices’.<sup>41</sup> However, female choirs were seemingly keen to participate and six competed in total for the prize of £15: Chester Ladies’ Choir (conducted by Mr Robinson), the Bethesda Female Party (conducted by Mr D. Pennant Evans), St. Cecilia Lady Vocalists (based in Rhyl, conducted by Mr Felix Watkins), Birkenhead Ladies’ Choir (conducted by Maggie Evans, ‘Megan Môn’), Llanrwst Ladies’ Choir (conducted by

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<sup>39</sup> *Rhyl Record and Advertiser*, 19 March 1892.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*, 2 September 1892.

Mr D. D. Parry) and Holyhead Female Harmonic Society (Mr W. S. Owen).<sup>42</sup> It is interesting to note here that the conductors are all male with the exception of Maggie Evans, the conductor of the winning choir; this is in marked contrast to the Llandudno Eisteddfod held just two years later in 1894. While female participation in choral performance was generally gaining impetus in the last decade of the nineteenth century (aided at a national level by the establishment of the new *eisteddfod* category), the discussion here will focus once more upon the case study of Hannah Hughes' choir. By examining a single choir, the pertinent issues of politics, class, gender and representation will be especially addressed.

### **From Rural to Urban: The Making of a New Choir**

Although Hannah Hughes did much to nurture music education, particularly female choral singing at both a local and a national level in the late 1880s and early 1890s, changes within her personal life resulted in changes in her professional life. In July 1896, Hannah Hughes was married to Edward Thomas (1853–1912) at Dalston Junction Baptist Church in London.<sup>43</sup> Following the wedding, Madame Hughes-Thomas (as she became known) moved from the rural setting of Maesteg to live with her new husband in Cardiff due to his professional responsibilities as a councillor.<sup>44</sup> However, like Hannah Hughes, Edward Thomas was also brought up in a rural setting. In particular, Edward (or 'Cochfarf' meaning 'Red Beard') was born at Nantywith farmhouse near Bettws, a village located in close proximity to Maesteg, where he was also educated until the family relocated to Blackmill (also in the county of Bridgend) following the death of his father c.1863. Although raised within an area often associated with the working classes, Edward was an artisan, particularly a carpenter who worked in Hengoed from 1876 and

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<sup>42</sup> The test pieces were 'The Corall'd Caves of Ocean' (H. Smart) and 'Although the Spring were far Away' (H. Engels). *Rhyl Journal*, 17 September 1892; *Tyst*, 16 September 1892.

<sup>43</sup> *Evening Express*, 13 July 1896. The article also promotes Hannah as a Licentiate of the London College of Music (LLCM), in contrast to her earlier title of ARCM that was publicised in local newspapers.

<sup>44</sup> The title 'Madame' is used frequently in connection with both Hannah Hughes-Thomas and Clara Novello Davies. Moreover, the title is also used to describe other prominent musical artists of the same period, such as the aforementioned Madame Adelina Patti, Madame Clara Butt and Madame Euphrosyne Parepa-Rosa. While the title is French, its use in relation to musicians of the nineteenth century is seemingly extensive. However, I have been unable to locate relevant sources on this issue.

in Cardiff from 1878. Here, he perfected his craft on Cardiff Town Hall situated on St. Mary's Street (now demolished); it was built originally by the architect Horace Jones (1819–1887), who later designed the Tower Bridge in London.

Despite his apparent skill in manual labour, Cochfarf had a number of interests that lay outside such parameters. He was deeply interested in the arts and in history, an interest that was maintained as a member of the Cardiff Free Library committee. Here, he helped to secure 'the Welsh portion of the famous Phillips Collection of Manuscripts'.<sup>45</sup> As a staunch Liberal, Cochfarf became involved also in a wide range of political activities in Cardiff. In 1880, his career in carpentry was side-lined in favour of working for the Cardiff Coffee Tavern Company. However, when the company decided to open on Sundays, a change that was met with disapproval by Cochfarf for religious reasons, he left and decided to open his own coffee tavern. Gordon Coffee Tavern, situated on Custom House Street, was more than just a coffee house; it provided a home for Cochfarf and a number of others to meet and discuss important political issues.

Once described as 'more Irish than the Irish',<sup>46</sup> Cochfarf was an ardent supporter of Irish Home Rule and was dubbed 'the acknowledged leader of the Irish Party in Cardiff' with Irish MPs meeting frequently to discuss relevant issues at his coffee house.<sup>47</sup> However, his involvement in Irish matters was criticised by some members of the local community who believed that Cochfarf's motive was for personal advancement (for his role as a town councillor) rather than genuine political interest. Utilising his connections with the media, Cochfarf refuted such allegations stating that he had supported Home Rule before he 'received any favour from

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<sup>45</sup> J. Kyrle Fletcher, *Cardiff Notes: Picturesque and Biographical* ([Cardiff]: [Western Mail], [1917]), p.87. The Phillips manuscripts were collected by Sir Thomas Phillips (1792–1872) of Middle Hill, Cheltenham, who was the owner of the largest private collection of books, manuscripts and documents (estimated at 60,000 items). Among the collection's Welsh items purchased by the Cardiff Free Library committee in 1896, was the *Book of Aneirin* (*Llyfr Aneirin*), a small manuscript of 38 pages containing the earliest extant example of literature in Welsh believed to have been written between 1250 and 1300. See 'The Book of Aneirin (NLW, Llyfr Aneirin, Cardiff MS 2.81)', NLW website <<http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=6493>> [accessed 20 January 2015].

<sup>46</sup> *Evening Express*, 10 July 1893.

<sup>47</sup> Fletcher, p.87.

the Irish party in Cardiff'.<sup>48</sup> Not only was he interested in Irish matters, he was also interested in also issues related to Wales. As an ardent Welsh nationalist, Cochfarf was a member of the Society for the Preservation of the Welsh Language (the 1901 Census confirms that he was bilingual), and it was, once again, his coffee house that acted as an important hub for safeguarding the native language. In 1885, a society known as Cymmrodorion Caerdydd (or Cymdeithas Cymry Caerdydd; English, 'Cardiff Welsh Society') was formed in the coffee house.

In short, Cochfarf was a highly influential figure in Cardiff. A friend of his, J. Kyrle Fletcher (a well-known antiquarian and bookseller), described Cochfarf as the 'Prince of Bohemia' in his account of life in Cardiff at the turn of the twentieth century. He explained: 'Cardiff has always been a Bohemian centre [...]. The Bohemians I have met there would not, perhaps, count as being ultra Bohemians if met in Paris, but here, in a world of hidebound conventions, any man who steps over the border line, if only a yard or two, may be termed a Bohemian'.<sup>49</sup> But how are the political interests and professional aspirations of Cochfarf related to the musical ambitions of his wife, Hannah Hughes-Thomas? There was, in fact, a direct relationship between the coffee house, the Welsh language society and Hannah's musical skill. According to the *Glamorgan Gazette*, Madame Hughes-Thomas formed a choir to perform 'Welsh music at the St. David's Day celebration of Cymdeithas Cymry Caerdydd' in 1905.<sup>50</sup> The choir's singing was evidently well-received since this appearance signalled the start of a diverse and successful career for its choristers.

However, it was not until 1907 that the choir received extensive public interest which was reported in the press. On 13 July, King Edward VII and his wife, Queen Alexandra, visited

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<sup>48</sup> *Evening Express*, 10 July 1893. Cochfarf possessed journalistic talent and wrote for a number of newspapers (including the *Glamorgan Gazette*) and also had a regular column entitled 'Cochfarf's Notes' in the *Evening Express*.

<sup>49</sup> Fletcher, p.79.

<sup>50</sup> *Glamorgan Gazette*, 26 August 1908. This was not the first time that Hannah Hughes-Thomas was involved in the St. David's Day celebrations in Cardiff. In 1903, she composed a song entitled 'St. David's Leek' using words written by James Mullin (1846–1920), an Irish doctor working in Cardiff, for a dinner to be held in Cardiff. Here, the link between Cochfarf's political interests and Hannah's music is evident since Mullin was the President of the United Irish League branch in Cardiff. Both the music and words of the song were published in *Western Mail*, 28 February. The material was also reproduced by the newspaper as a single sheet. See Cardiff Central Library: LC: 784.7 (046) MUL.

Cardiff in order to open the new Alexandra Dock. After arriving upon the Royal Yacht, the party journeyed upon a decorated rail carriage, met hundreds of school children in Cathays Park (to whom commemorative coins were given), had lunch at the newly-built City Hall (opened in 1906) and visited areas of the district including Llandaff and Caerphilly. The grand opening was preceded with an evening dinner aboard the Royal Yacht for which Madame Hughes-Thomas 'proffered the services of her singers to give a programme of music on board'.<sup>51</sup> The general custom for royal entertainment involved formal invitations being sent to carefully selected ensembles, and thus, from this point of view, the appearance of Madame Hughes-Thomas' choir was unusual. However, Madame Hughes-Thomas had supposedly submitted the proposed programme in advance, all of which was approved to her surprise.<sup>52</sup> In addition to her proposed programme, several additions were made at the request of the King and Queen; the King requested the glees 'The Spinning Chorus' (Wagner) and 'Where the Bee Sucks' (Bishop), while the Queen requested 'The Spanish Gipsy Girl' (Lassen) – the test piece from the Chicago Eisteddfod, 1893. Singing the same repertoire was not the only similarity between Madame Hughes-Thomas and of Clara Novello Davies; for this royal occasion, the choristers were dressed in Welsh national costume (see Plate 6.2).

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<sup>51</sup> *Glamorgan Gazette*, 26 August 1908.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*



**Plate 6.2:** Madame Hughes-Thomas' Choir in National Dress<sup>53</sup>

It must be wondered, however, how a choir with little public profile was afforded the opportunity to sing before royalty. In this matter, the personal connections of Edward Thomas were almost certainly significant. From honing his craft as an artisan to becoming an elected representative of the council in 1890 (and later Mayor of Cardiff in 1902), Cochfarf demonstrated that class boundaries could be surpassed; that is, he was socially mobile. Moreover, the early 1900s represented a period of intense development in Cardiff, which was officially granted status as a city in 1905. In 1898, the Bute family agreed to sell Cathays Park to the town for the sum of £161,000, a plot of land measuring 59 acres which once held a Georgian mansion built for John Stuart (1744–1814), the First Marquis of Bute. In the following years, an extensive project involved the creation of a civic centre that included a number of important buildings such as City Hall, the University College, the Law Courts and the National Museum amongst others. One of

<sup>53</sup> 'Madame Hughes Thomas' Welsh Ladies Choir. Sepia-tinted postcard, 12th July, 1907' [2010.1122], McCann Collection, Royal Academy of Music <<http://apollo.ram.ac.uk/emuweb/pages/ram/display.php?irn=21281>> [accessed 10 December 2014]. The original photograph was taken on 10 July 1907 by Andrew Lawrence of 48 Ninian Road, Cardiff. It is now held at the National Archives (Kew): 1/511/122.

the conditions of sale was that an avenue lined with elm trees would not to be altered. It was named King Edward VII Avenue. He was not alone since the Queen (Alexandra) was also honoured with the location of Alexandra Gardens located in the centre of the complex.

The plans for a project of such significance were probably put in place long before they came to fruition in the first decade of the twentieth century. Cochfarf, as a county councillor throughout the 1890s, would no doubt have been involved in the realisation of these plans. In addition to building projects, he was involved also in events concerning the representation of Cardiff at national and international events. For example, he was one of the secretaries for the National Eisteddfod when it was held in Cardiff in 1879. In particular, he played a very important role in the development of choral performance in Wales. In May 1900, Cochfarf, then Deputy Mayor of Cardiff, chaired a conference to decide whether representative choirs from Wales should perform at the Paris Exhibition later that year; it was his decision that such a venture would be 'desirable' for the people of Wales (see Chapter 5).<sup>54</sup> As previously discussed, the inclusion of Welsh choirs, both mixed and single-sexed, further promoted the musical skill of Welsh singers by confirming and expanding the reputation that had been earned at the Chicago Eisteddfod seven years earlier.

Although it was Clara Novello Davies' choir that represented Wales in Paris, Cochfarf was later able to utilise his professional connections for the benefit of his wife and her newly-formed choir. When Madame Hughes-Thomas and her choir decided to tour America the year after the Royal visit, however, he sternly set the record straight:

When the choir went before the King and Queen in July last many American gentlemen made pressing invitations for a visit from the choir, and after very careful consideration Madame Thomas decided to go. [Cochfarf] wished this to be very clearly understood lest people should imagine that the choir was thrusting itself upon the United States.<sup>55</sup>

The tour, which commenced in September 1908 and consisted of over 50 concerts, encompassed a wide area with venues in Atlanta City, Utica, Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Harrisburg, Johnstown,

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<sup>54</sup> *North Wales Times*, 26 May 1900.

<sup>55</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 7 March 1908.



Pittsburgh, Newcastle (Pennsylvania), Canton (Ohio), Cleveland, Chicago, Indianapolis and Buffalo amongst others.<sup>56</sup> Although a major tour that involved international travel, details regarding how the tour was funded are unknown. Unlike the choirs who raised money by way of concert performances and fundraising activities for the Paris Exhibition or the Chicago Eisteddfod (or both), Madame Hughes-Thomas does not seem to have raised funds to subsidise her tour in this manner.



**Plate 6.3:** Marianne Squire<sup>57</sup>

The issue of finance is particularly pertinent in relation to the membership of the choir. Several newspaper reports published in the early twentieth century refer to the choristers as being ‘professionally trained’,<sup>58</sup> with one noting that 20 of the 22 members were pupils of Madame Hughes-Thomas.<sup>59</sup> Although the names of the two members who did not receive musical tuition are unknown (together with details of how they were admitted into the choir), the fact that most

<sup>56</sup> *Glamorgan Gazette*, 26 August 1908.

<sup>57</sup> Image reproduced from *Cymroa'r Celt Llundain*, 9 November 1907.

<sup>58</sup> *Rhondda Leader, Maesteg, Garw and Ogmore Telegraph*, 15 May 1909; *North Wales Weekly News*, 6 August 1909.

<sup>59</sup> *Glamorgan Gazette*, 26 August 1908.

of the choristers paid Madame Hughes-Thomas for music lessons is significant since they needed to possess the financial means to do so. In this manner, a parallel can be drawn between the membership of Clara's choir and that of Hannah's choir. While Hannah had been removed from her Maesteg Music School for a number of years, the choir featured two choristers from the Bridgend area: Miss Marianne Squire of Coytrahen (Plate 6.3), winner of the chief solo competition at the Swansea National Eisteddfod in 1907, and Miss Elsie Roberts. The full line-up for the 1908 tour was as follows:<sup>60</sup>

Conductress:	Madame Hughes-Thomas
Accompanist:	Miss Dolly Hodder
Soprano 1 (7):	Miss Marianne Squire (Coytrahen); Mrs S. J. Thomas (Llanell[i]); Miss Nanci Nolcini; Miss Annie Jones; Miss Bessie Lewis; Miss Louie Edwards; Miss Gladys Stockdale
Soprano 2 (5):	Miss Jennie Emmanuel; Miss Marie Stephen; Miss Minnie Howell; Miss Marie French; Miss Elsie Roberts (Bridgend)
Contralto 1 (4):	Miss Marion Lewis; Miss Ethel Jakeman; Miss Rene Rees; Miss Gwendolyn Lyons
Contralto 2 (4):	Miss Nansi Langdon, Madame May Jones; Miss Emma Hughes; Miss Gertrude Gronow

As the above schedule indicates, there was a slight imbalance of voices in favour of the first soprano section which contained seven voices.

There was one striking feature of Madame Hughes-Thomas' choir: its name. Before the choir departed on its first tour to America, it was referred to in the newspapers as the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir, a familiar title. While title was appropriate since the choir was, after all, a female choir that had sung before royalty, it is surprising that this title was adopted here without change since the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir was a name that was indelibly linked to Clara Novello Davies. Such a move could have enhanced the career of the newer choir by drawing upon the established reputation of the older; for those who were unaware that the choirs were

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. The tour was also supported by Edward Thomas (Cochfart) as business manager and Mr Thomas Francis Davies of Ton Pentre, who had visited the United States with different choirs on three occasions. The initial arrangements for the tour were made by a Mr J. T. Austin, who was unable to attend.

not in any way connected, confusion could ensue. It must be remembered that Clara's Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir remained active until 1937, and thus these two choirs with the same name co-existed during the early part of the twentieth century. From this standpoint, it is interesting that Clara fails to mention Hannah's choir in her autobiography. However, it is clear that the choirs were not linked.<sup>61</sup>

The American audiences were savvy and recognised the differences between the two choirs while also noting their similarities. Following the precedent set at the royal performance, members of Madame Hughes-Thomas' choir appeared once more in the 'picturesque' Welsh costume.<sup>62</sup> Prior to their departure, Mr Lorin Lathrop, the new American Consul at Cardiff, noted as much in an address in the United Methodist Church (Penarth Road, Cardiff), at which the choir was singing. He stated that: 'he would not venture to think what the officers would say when they saw the Welsh costumes and headdresses. (Laughter) He suggested they should wear them as they landed and [...] give them some of that harmony we have listened to, for music soothes the savage beast (Renewed laughter)'.<sup>63</sup> However, the choir was well-received in America. The *Utica Daily Press* commented that the choir was 'heard with the best effect in the simple and sweet songs of Wales, which are rendered with most delightful harmony and in a most enjoyable manner'.<sup>64</sup> However, it stated also that the choir 'compare[d] very favourably with the ladies' choir which was [t]here in 1893, and of which Clara Novello Davies was leader'.<sup>65</sup> As such, the comparison between two female choirs using the same name and performing in the same sartorial code is inevitable.

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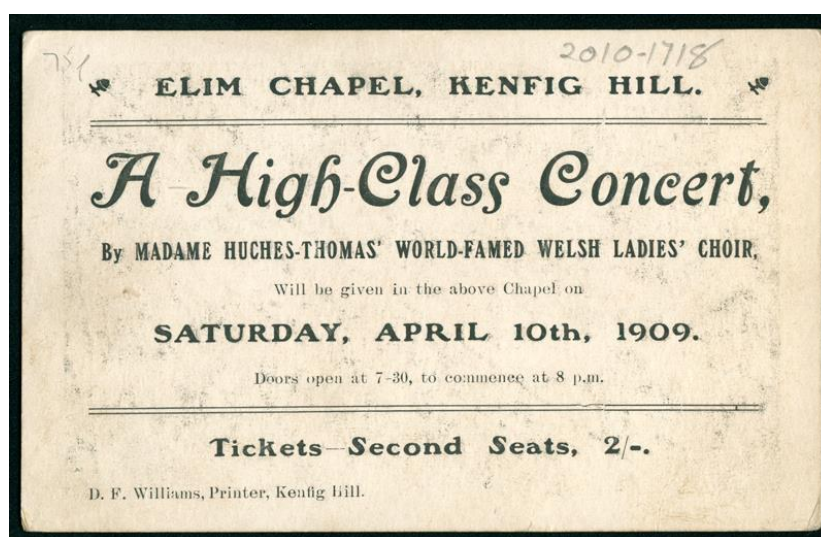
<sup>61</sup> For example, for the aforementioned Royal visit to Cardiff in 1907, the official order of proceedings stated that 'during the evening [12 July], while the Royal Party are at dinner on board the yacht, Madame Hughes-Thomas's Ladies' Choir of 40 young women, dressed in Welsh costume, will sing Welsh airs'. For the following day, it is noted that the 'Cardiff Festival Choir and Madame Clara Novello Davies' Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir will sing the National Anthem (accompanied by the Band of His Majesty's Grenadier Guards)' after the Queen Alexandra Dock had been declared open. There is no suggestion here (or elsewhere) that the choirs were linked. See NLW: 2008 XC 4267, Programme for the 'Visit of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, and Princess Victoria, for the opening of Queen Alexandra Dock, Bute Docks, Cardiff' (Cardiff: Cardiff City Council, 1907).

<sup>62</sup> *Weekly Mail*, 26 September 1908.

<sup>63</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 7 March 1908.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in *Weekly Mail*, 26 September 1908.

<sup>65</sup> *Weekly Mail*, 26 September 1908.



**Plate 6.4:** ‘High-Class Concert’ postcard, 1909<sup>66</sup>

The choir was also lauded in Wales. With headlines such as ‘Welsh Ladies’ Choir in America: Glowing Criticisms in the Press’ being featured in the Welsh media, the reputation of the choir continued to grow despite the absence of the choir for a lengthy period. In fact, cable communications of the choir’s success were reproduced or discussed in local newspapers. These helped to secure ‘world-famed’ status of the choir. Upon return to Wales, the choir gave concerts in Kenfig Hill (Bridgend) and Maesteg for which the title ‘Madame Hughes-Thomas’ World-Famed Welsh Ladies’ Choir’ was used on promotional postcards (see Plate 6.4). Here, the issue of social status was explicitly highlighted; both concerts were described as being ‘high-class’. However, such an accolade created a sense of ambiguity: was it the performers or the repertoire that was deemed to be ‘high-class’?

Following previous discussion, it is likely that the title referred to the social status of the singers. Moreover, reviewers of the concerts highlighted the ‘professional’ training of the choir, choristers having the economic means to demonstrate social status. It is worth mentioning that

<sup>66</sup> ‘Madame Hughes-Thomas’ World-Famed Welsh Ladies’ Choir. Black and white postcard, c.1909’ [2010.1718], McCann Collection, Royal Academy of Music <<http://apollo.ram.ac.uk/emuweb/pages/ram/>> [accessed 10 December 2014]. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate the full programme.

Kenfig Hill, like Maesteg, was a district associated with mining. At the time of the concert in 1909, there were five collieries operating in the local area: Aberbaiden (1906–1959), Cribwr Fawr (1905–1935), Mill Pit, Cefn Cribwr (c.1900–1913), Morfa (1849–1913) and Pentre Slant (1908–1959). Despite providing necessary employment and economic prosperity, the dangers of coalmining were well-known in the area. On 26 August 1892, an explosion thought to have been caused by a faulty miner's lamp at Parc Slip Colliery (c.1864–1904) resulted in the loss of 112 men and boys. While the coalmining industry in general was not explicably linked to the concert in question, it serves to highlight that the residents living in the vicinity of the concert venue, Elim Chapel, were probably working class and it was an area especially affected by the disaster. From this perspective, the appearance of a 'high-class' female choir for entertainment seems to paradoxical. It is also interesting that the postcard only advertises second seats (at a price of two shillings); were the first seats reserved for invited guests?

It may have been noted in relation to the above concert that the word 'royal' was omitted from the choir's title. However, the disassociation (incidental or otherwise) of the choir from royal performances was to be short-lived since the choir was invited to perform before the King's sister, Princess Louise, and her husband, the Duke of Argyll at Miskin Manor in July 1909. Here, Princess Louise (1848–1939), an 'excellent judge of music both vocal and instrumental', allegedly declared the singing of Madame Hughes-Thomas' choir to be 'excellent', 'wonderful' and 'too beautiful'.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, the Duke of Argyll was more interested in the general history of Welsh choral music. In a conversation with Cochfarf, he stated that 'Celtic part-singing [as seen in Highland musical festivals] was a much older practice than is generally admitted by musical historians'.<sup>68</sup> Joining the conversation, Princess Louise invited Madame Hughes-Thomas and Cochfarf to her residence in Oban to attend a Highland Mòd, a Scottish festival of song, arts and

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<sup>67</sup> *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*, 30 July 1909.

<sup>68</sup> *North Wales Weekly News*, 6 August 1909.

culture, not only to observe local choirs in competition but also to compare ‘Welsh with Gaelic national modes in music’.<sup>69</sup>

After accepting the invitation, Hannah and Cochfarf travelled to Oban to stay as guests of the Duke and Duchess on 13 and 14 September 1909. On this occasion, the invitation was limited to the couple, although it was suggested that a second visit would provide an opportunity for members of the choir to stay at the royal residence. Once again, it is likely that the social status of the couple, Cochfarf especially, affected such opportunities. In a similar vein, in August 1910, the choir sang for David Lloyd George (1863–1945) and his wife at their family home. During the preceding summer, Madame Hughes-Thomas and her choir had toured West and North Wales where Lloyd George, who was serving as Chancellor of the Exchequer (from 1908 to 1915), first heard the choir at a concert held in Criccieth. In a letter sent to Cochfarf, he stated:

Mrs. Lloyd George and myself derived great pleasure by listening to the chaste, cultured, and melodious singing of Madame Hughes-Thomas’ charming choir. I would have expressed my pleasure at the concert had it not involved me in an implied duty from that time forward to speak at other concerts my wife and I may attend.<sup>70</sup>

It is with a sense of irony that such private correspondence was published in a newspaper (albeit local), particularly since Lloyd George (who later became Prime Minister, 1916–1922) was seemingly concerned about professional duties.

While the socio-political position of Cochfarf may have influenced the performance opportunities afforded to his wife’s choir, it is important to consider the experiences of choir members to understand fully how individuals negotiated their position within a ‘managed’ choir. In doing so, it is possible to uncover a bottom-up rather than a top-down reading of female choral singing in Wales at this time. Utilising primary sources, the next section will focus on the personal accounts of one chorister in order to observe how an individual reflected upon and

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> *Glamorgan Gazette*, 26 August 1910.

recorded her own experiences in the choir. For example, what did she consider to be important? Did she enjoy being part of the choir? What repertoire did they sing?

### **The Diary of a Choir Girl**

After securing a reputation both within Wales and beyond, Madame Hughes-Thomas and her choir embarked upon four annual tours of the United States and Canada beginning in 1908. Here, I draw upon ethnographic data in the form of a personal diary written by Elizabeth Ann Clement between September 1911 and April 1912.<sup>71</sup> Utilising this source (currently housed in the West Glamorgan Archives), I will trace the movements of the choir and I will interrogate further the relevant notions of class and gender by examining repertoire, venues and reception.

Elizabeth Clement (Plate 6.5) was from Pontrhydyfen, a small village located in the Afan Valley near Neath and Port Talbot. She was a young girl of nineteen when she travelled to the United States with the choir. On 7 September 1911, Elizabeth and the other members of the choir boarded the one o'clock train from Cardiff to London, where they performed in a concert in Holborn Hall. The concert was attended by an 'enthusiastic' audience that also included, according to Elizabeth, Charles Vincent (n.d.) who was the composer of the 'Welsh Rhapsody', an item that the choir had sung. However, it appears that the piece was originally composed as an orchestral piece by the English composer, Edward German (1862–1936), for the Cardiff Musical Festival held in 1904. The next morning, Elizabeth and the girls (as she calls them) narrowly caught both the Liverpool Boat Express train and boarded the Empress of Ireland with just three minutes to spare. On board, it was realised that two of the singers, Gwen and Fanw, had been missing. Apparently, they returned to Paddington to search for sheet music that had been mislaid; they were later reunited. It is worth mentioning at this point that the names Elizabeth, Gwen or Myfanwy (also called Fanw) did not feature in the earlier list of choristers that travelled with

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<sup>71</sup> Following the publication of a picture of Madame Hughes-Thomas' choir in the *South Wales Evening Post*, a reader revealed that her mother was not only part of the choir, but had kept a diary while on tour in America from September 1911 to April 1912.

Madame Hughes-Thomas on the first tour to America in 1908. This indicates that the composition of the choir had changed by at least three singers. Unfortunately, a full list of members for the 1911 tour does not appear to exist.



**Plate 6.5:** Elizabeth Clement<sup>72</sup>

Distinctions regarding class begin to appear when the choir was aboard the ship to Canada. While the sea was reportedly uneasy for the majority of the week's journey from Liverpool to Québec, it was on the second night that the passengers were jolted by an 'awful jerk'. Elizabeth exclaimed: 'I went running up to see what was up, found a crowd on deck, looking at a light on the water [...] A man in third class had fallen over board [...] They also lowered a boat, but could not save him'.<sup>73</sup> Three days later, the choir gave its first concert 'by the 2<sup>nd</sup> class saloon' which Elizabeth said she 'enjoyed very much', although this had more to do with

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<sup>72</sup> West Glamorgan Archives: D/D Z 13/2/3.

<sup>73</sup> West Glamorgan Archives: D/D Z 13/4, Diary of Elizabeth Anne Clement.



the company rather than the performance opportunity since she noted that her enjoyment was ‘especialy [*sic*] [due to] three of the stewards [who] were fine’.<sup>74</sup> The following evening, the girls performed a concert in the first class saloon which was chaired by Viscount Castlereagh and attended by Captain Lambert, the manager of the Strand Theatre in London, amongst others. Although three different social classes are mentioned by Elizabeth, it is not clear to which she believes the members of the choir belong; it is noted that the girls were sleeping in bunk beds and also that Elizabeth was sharing a berth with a lady from Montreal and her child. The very last entrance of the diary (dated 1 April 1912), however, notes that one of the girls, Flossie, had lost her purse containing fifty dollars, a substantial amount of money at this time.

Upon arriving in Québec, the choir girls spent a few days exploring the area before giving their first concert on land at the Methodist Church in Port Arthur on 18 September. From this point onwards, the choir gave a concert a day (sometimes two) for the duration of the tour with very few exceptions; they gave almost 150 concerts in total during the tour which lasted for six and a half months. From Port Arthur, they boarded the midnight train across Canada, and performed concerts in Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria and many other smaller towns. On 30 October, Elizabeth, who had been involved in a car accident five days earlier, re-joined the choir to cross the border into America, travelling down the West coast through Portland, California City, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego. On 30 December, they began travelling east visiting Salt Lake City, Denver, Omaha, Kansas, Iowa, Chicago, Indianapolis and Pittsburgh.

While such an extensive tour certainly required careful planning, it is apparent from Elizabeth’s diary that details regarding accommodation were not always secure. For example, on 12 October, she noted: ‘all hotels [in Cranbrook, Canada] full, we slept in the car. [...] but we were awakened by the terrible heat from the steam pipes, we were quite scared we had such a near

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

escape from being boiled'.<sup>75</sup> On other occasions, Elizabeth recorded how she and the other girls had arranged the coach seats as much as they could to resemble beds. These occurrences were infrequent since the members of the choir usually stayed in hotels, the names of which were diligently recorded throughout the diary, which also includes a sprinkling of souvenir-type stickers from various hotels. However, as the tour was coming to a close at New Kensington (Pennsylvania), Elizabeth notes that all of the girls were staying in separate hotels in the area.

As a young girl of nineteen, Elizabeth seemingly wished to enjoy all the experiences the tour had to offer in matters not only related to music. Following a visit from Mr Reese, a chief engineer from a mine in Rossland, and his wife, the choir had afternoon tea with Mrs McIntyre who Elizabeth described as a 'very nice' Scot. She added 'we had fun with the swing' in the same entry, and three days later, she reiterated the point saying she had 'fine fun with the swings' at the park.<sup>76</sup> However, Elizabeth's pleasure-seeking involved a little more at times; while staying in Centralia, Pennsylvania, Elizabeth and the girls were reprimanded for causing a 'sceane [*sic*] of some excitement'. She explained:

Several of us were caught indulging in some fun and frolic in the corridor where we were sleeping[.] Consequently we were marched off in disgrace + put to sleep in head quarters to ensure silence for the rest of the waking hours which were not very many as it was then 11.30. Fun we will not forget.<sup>77</sup>

Despite being scolded for such frolicking, it is clear that Elizabeth and the other choir girls respected their conductor, Madame Hannah Hughes-Thomas. Referring to her solely as 'Madame' throughout the her diary, Elizabeth noted the occasions when Hannah was presented with bouquets after concert performances, as well as more personal accounts of the relationship between the two, such as when Madame bought her a bouquet following an accident and when the two shared a taxi together after performing at the Carnegie Hall; a concert that Elizabeth knew was 'important'. Moreover, Elizabeth described how she and the other girls shopped for

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<sup>75</sup> West Glamorgan Archives: D/D Z 13/4, Diary of Elizabeth Anne Clement.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

gifts to place in Hannah's Christmas stocking, gifts which they presented to Hannah on Christmas morning after singing carols outside her room.<sup>78</sup> On a more serious note, it is clear from the diary that Elizabeth was a diligent singer.

On 19 September, for example, she writes that she had a lesson in the morning (presumably a singing tutorial with Madame) and read in the afternoon, before singing at a 'fine' concert for which 'each girl was in good voice'.<sup>79</sup> There were other occasions, too, when Elizabeth avoided ancillary activities in favour of musical preparation for the forthcoming concerts. Moreover, she was evidently concerned with the performances themselves. While her notes regarding the concerts are sparse in comparison with those discussing the journey or the scenery, she often commented whether she considered the concert to be good or bad. Here, her aesthetic preferences are not only telling in terms of musical practice but also in terms of social class. For example, while High River (near to Calgary) is described as an 'awfully rotten place', Elizabeth notes that the evening concert there was 'very good' and that the audience was of a 'very good class'.<sup>80</sup> By contrast, she noted that the audience at a concert held at the Tabernacle in Provo (Utah) was 'to [*sic*] poor for anything'.<sup>81</sup> She held the sentiment for concerts held in California (20 November) and San Luis Obispo (6 December), both of which Elizabeth described as 'concert fair, audience poor'.<sup>82</sup>

While it could be argued that the use of the word 'poor' was a reflection of the audience's interaction with and reaction to the musical performance (rather than a comment upon social status), the reception of the choir by its audience was clearly important to Elizabeth. She frequently notes the attendance of Welsh patrons at the concerts and visits made to the choir by Welsh people. For example, on 24 October, she recorded:

An invitation for us to go to tea, to some Welsh peoples' place (Mrs Jones). Met Mrs Kate Wynne Matheson, the old Welsh contralto and mother of the great Edith Wynne (actress), most

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<sup>78</sup> It is interesting to note that Elizabeth does not mention Cochfarf at all throughout the contents of her diary.

<sup>79</sup> West Glamorgan Archives: D/D Z 13/4, Diary of Elizabeth Anne Clement.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

pathetic sight to see the old lady, when she saw us all she got so excited, she was nearly 90 years of age, and she sang wonderfully well 'Strangers Yet'. She must have been a great singer in her time. Had a glorious concert. The Welsh boys of Vancouver came over.<sup>83</sup>

With such an emphasis placed on the native connection between the choir, its audiences and its guests, it is perhaps unsurprising that the choir continued to perform in Welsh traditional dress. Like Clara, this chosen dress code presented to its audience not only a sense of Welsh femininity but also a visual symbol of national pride.

However, it is apparent that this was not the only costume used by the Hughes-Thomas choir. On 23 September, she noted that a Mr Cosgrove (relationship to the choir unknown) had taken the members of the choir for a group photograph wearing black and white evening dresses (see Plates 6.6 and 6.7). This was not the only occasion that the choir deviated from their traditional attire. At a concert held to mark the anniversary of the death of Robert Burns, the choir changed at half time into white dresses replete with a Scotch plaid scarf and a Scotch headdress. The concert, which was held at the Opera House in Fort Collins, Colorado, was attended by around 3,000 to 4,000 people and she duly recorded that most of the repertoire for the evening was 'Scotch'. It must be noted that Elizabeth rarely comments on repertoire. In fact, she only records a performance of Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus' at the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City with the temple's choir, and two occasions when Madame Hughes-Thomas asked Elizabeth to sing the solo in the Welsh lullaby 'Cân Cwsg' ('Sleep Song').

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.



**Plate 6.6:** Madame Hughes-Thomas' Choir in black formalwear<sup>84</sup>



**Plate 6.7:** Madame Hughes-Thomas' Choir in white formalwear<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> West Glamorgan Archives: D/DZ 13/2/1.

<sup>85</sup> West Glamorgan Archives: D/DZ 13/2/2.

Although Elizabeth does not discuss the choir's repertoire in detail, information about the choir's performance practice has been uncovered in a newspaper report concerning two performances in San Francisco; here, the full repertoire of the choir is listed. Set alongside comments about a love story, a 'rag' party, a story about a socialist voter and a lengthy guide to cooking vegetables, lies a newspaper report entitled 'Picked Voices of Wales are Heard in Concert'; all are arranged in a column named 'In Woman's World'.<sup>86</sup> The feature also provides photographs of three choristers. The columnist exclaimed:

There is enough youth and spontaneity in Madame Hughes-Thomas' song birds to make the national Welsh songs they sing the most memorable part of their gift to their auditors. Every Welshman in the assembly knew perfectly well yesterday how and why his ancestors withstood Caesar and have held out in native speech and custom against the English through ten centuries.<sup>87</sup>

At these concerts, the choir performed a varied repertoire in Welsh and English, thereby addressing a wider identity both national (in Welsh) and colonial (in English). For example, the choir sang a number of part-songs in Welsh, such as 'Yr Haf' ('The Summer' by Gwent), 'Y Deryn Pur' (arr. Emlyn Evans), 'Clychau Aberdyfi' (arr. Emlyn Evans) and 'Cân Cwsg' (Bishop). Since the first four pieces mentioned here were performed first by Clara's Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir, their continued use by a different ensemble suggests not only that Clara's choir had set a precedent but also that such repertoire was becoming popular among female choirs from Wales. Although it could be argued that a distinct 'canon' of performed femininity (in terms of both repertoire and concert dress) was developing in Wales, a reference to the Welsh male choral tradition is also evident. Once again, a female choir recreates the masculine sound of 'Men of Harlech'. Described in the relevant programme as a 'battle song', the choir

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<sup>86</sup> *The San Francisco Call*, 1 December 1911.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

performed (perhaps unintentionally) a masculine, rather than a feminine reading of musical Wales.

On the other hand, the female choir also performed a piece entitled ‘Nyni yw’r Merched Cerddgar’ (‘We are the Musical Daughters’), conceivably suggestive of a feminine rather than a masculine reading of Welshness. However, this piece was composed by William Aubrey Williams (‘Gwilym Gwent’, 1834–1891) in 1880, the piece originally intended for male voices (TTBB). The original title featured the word ‘*meibion*’ (meaning ‘sons’) rather than ‘*merched*’ (meaning ‘daughters’). As a song for men, the piece was featured as a test piece for *eisteddfodau* held in Wales, such as at the annual *eisteddfod* that took place in Meirion in 1891 (prize £8) and the Cardiff Cymmrodorion Eisteddfod in 1886 (prize £5).<sup>88</sup> Moreover, the piece was often performed by men at *eisteddfodau* held in the Welsh diaspora, such as at the Eisteddfod Gadeiriol y Wladfa in Trelew, Patagonia in 1915 (prize \$60).<sup>89</sup> By drawing upon and adapting male repertoire to suit female voices, Madame Hughes-Thomas and her choir were able to confirm yet contest an established precedent of choral performance in Wales.

This was not an isolated case of repertoire adaptation both at home and abroad. On 23 July 1910, Hughes-Thomas’ Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir presented a concert at Morfa Chapel in Kidwelly (West Wales) that included the ‘feminised’ piece, ‘Nyni yw’r Merched Cerddgar’.<sup>90</sup> In addition, the female choir sang ‘Comrades in Arms’, a piece written originally for male voices by the French composer Adolphe Adam (1803–1856). Although written as a musical setting of a poem entitled ‘Les Enfants de Paris’ (‘The Children of Paris’) by George Linley, the piece was particularly popular with male choirs in Wales during the nineteenth century (due in part because of its association with war and masculinity).<sup>91</sup> Moreover, the song had a closer association with men since it was originally written by Adam, Professor of Composition at the Paris Conservatoire

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<sup>88</sup> *Llangollen Advertiser, Denbighshire, Merionethshire and North Wales Journal*, 9 July 1891; *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, 22 July 1886.

<sup>89</sup> *Dravod*, 11 June 1915.

<sup>90</sup> The programme for the concert was printed in the *Carmarthen Weekly Reporter*, 29 July 1910.

<sup>91</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.183.

from 1849 to 1859, as part of the paternalistic *Orphéon* movement in France (see Chapter 1). Like Gwent's 'Nyni yw'r Meibion Cerddgar', the piece was also chosen as a test piece for Welsh *eisteddfodau*. For example, at an Easter *eisteddfod* held in Abergavenny in 1906, Adam's song was performed by 22 choirs competing in the contest for male voices.<sup>92</sup> More generally, the piece had become so popular by the turn of the twentieth century that Emlyn Evans (the aforementioned Welsh composer) believed it to be hackneyed.<sup>93</sup> In this manner, the rendition of this piece by a female choir is significant for two reasons: first, it represented a continuation of Welsh choral practice since 'Comrades in Arms' had a long-standing history in Wales (the earliest performances occurred in the late 1860s);<sup>94</sup> second, it signalled a discontinuation of the past since its performance by women contested the foundations upon which such popularity was built. Instead, the masculine subject of Adam's song is presented here as an alternative conception of nationhood through music; a symbol of Welsh femininity heard aurally and seen visually in choral performance.

## Conclusions

Along with Clara's Choir, Hannah Hughes-Thomas also inspired women to participate in choral music, particularly in her own Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir. In this chapter, I noted a number of similarities between the two Royal Welsh Ladies' Choirs in terms of social class (membership to both choirs was restricted by economic means), concert dress (both performed in Welsh national costume) and shared musical repertoire. In terms of repertoire, I contend that the use of pieces written for and established by male choirs represented both a continuation of and a dislocation from a Welsh musical past. Moreover, I argue that Clara's choir provided a precedent upon which other choirs could model themselves. The notion of choral singers as role models will be

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<sup>92</sup> The successful choir was Côr Beaufort (from Blaenau Gwent), conducted by Joseph Price. *Y Tyst*, 25 April 1906.

<sup>93</sup> Gareth Williams (1998), p.190.

<sup>94</sup> At an *eisteddfod* held at the Temperance Hall in Merthyr Tydfil on Christmas Day in 1865, 'Comrades in Arms' was performed by the Cymmrodorion Glee Club ('a choir of picked voices under Mr D. Frances') in an evening concert. In particular, the piece was described as the '*chef d'oeuvre*' (English, 'masterpiece') of the glee club.



discussed in the following chapter. In particular, I will interrogate the notions of class and gender by examining the domestic responsibilities of the bourgeoisie in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the labour patterns of the working classes in Wales. In this manner, I will show how members of both Royal Welsh Ladies' Choirs contested established codes of behaviour for women in this period.

## Chapter Seven

### Society and Singing: Examining Gender, Ideology and Song

‘Welsh women are culturally invisible’.<sup>1</sup> Highlighting the pillars upon which Welsh cultural identity has been built – coalminers, male voice choirs and rugby matches – Deirdre Beddoe, a Welsh social historian, argues that women have been neglected historically from constructions of native identity. Each of the groups mentioned has been and continues to be utilised for the purposes of promoting a sense of Welshness, and are both exclusively male and based on mass numbers. But what about Welsh women? According to Beddoe, the representation of females in Wales is often reduced to a ‘tiny, usually solitary figure [...] in national costume [which] pales further into insignificance’ when compared to the dominant masculine image of Wales.<sup>2</sup> However, as the previous chapters have shown, examples of mass female choirs did, in fact, exist in the historical record, although ‘mass’ in this sense is not entirely commensurate with the familiar notion of massed male voice choirs in Wales. Beddoe’s comment regarding national costume prompts further clarification about national identity. Contrary to Beddoe’s suggestion that national costume itself contributes to a quaint and unassuming representation of Welsh women, I argue that the representation of both Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choirs in national costume enabled the choirs to build a cross-national (for example, in England) and an international reputation. Here, national costume presented a distinction that was welcomed (and came to be expected) by such audiences.

However, it must be questioned how such representations of women in music remain absent from more recent academic discourse dealing with cultural matters. In order to present a broader picture of social life for women in general during nineteenth- and early twentieth-century in Britain, this chapter identifies the social ideologies underpinning the roles of women

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<sup>1</sup> Deirdre Beddoe, ‘Images of Welsh Women’ in Tony Curtis (ed.), *Wales: The Imagined Nation* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986), p.227.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

and how participation in musical activities supported or contested such ideas in Wales. In particular, it reports the expectations of women in this period especially in relation to domestic responsibilities and social visibility. Although the model of female behaviour was shaped at first in England (in bourgeois settings) before being transferred to Wales (in working-class contexts), I argue that the members of the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir present a model to which young girls could aspire despite the fact that the members did not conform to the societal expectations regarding domesticity and visibility.

### **Victorian Values**

In 1854, the first part of a lengthy narrative poem by Coventry Patmore (1823–1896), an English poet, was published in London. Entitled 'The Angel in the House', the poem depicts the vision of an 'ideal' woman; she is 'devout', 'angelical', and 'her modesty [is] her chiefest grace'.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, she is married. As a wife and mother, she obeys and adores her husband, promoting his self-being while simultaneously allowing her own life to be scheduled by the responsibilities of motherhood, social engagements, religion and domestic management. Although it has been suggested that the woman portrayed was based upon Patmore's wife, Emily, the woman in the poem is nameless: she is the model Victorian wife. From this standpoint, it is perhaps unsurprising that the term 'angel in the house' was later utilised extensively throughout England to describe women in the Victorian era.

However, the notion of women as 'angels in the house' was class-specific relating only to women who belonged to the middle class. Although women in this social class were often educated from a young age, their acquisition of skills was frequently limited to those that could be developed within the household setting, such as needlework, painting or playing the piano; the possession of a piano was, of course, linked to an elevated social and economic status. While Patmore's poem cemented the ideal vision of womanhood in mid-nineteenth-century England,

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<sup>3</sup> Coventry Patmore, 'The Angel in the House', BL website <<http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/>>[accessed 11 February 2015].

the association between women and the domestic sphere was actually formed much earlier. The period 1780–1830 has been said to represent the assembly of a new social class – the industrial bourgeoisie. In the context of an expanding economic consciousness in England, this new social class defined itself not only against the working class but also against the classes of the landed gentry and the aristocracy.<sup>4</sup>

Instead, the definition of this newly-formed bourgeoisie was based upon social, political and economic matters. In particular, it was interested in a notion of redefining cultural ideologies, especially as they related to the behaviour of women. Pre-empting the ‘angel in the house’ as depicted by Patmore, central here was the idea that women should be confined to the domestic sphere, acting primarily as mothers and wives. The development and promotion of such an ideology was heavily influenced in England by the rise of evangelicalism in the late eighteenth century. Unlike Methodist doctrines promoted by figures such as John Wesley (1703–1791) that marked a divergence from the established Church of England, evangelicalism presented the idea of reform from within. Involved in the struggle regarding anti-slavery and the presentation of a new moral code, evangelicalism showed its followers how to behave both politically and socially. Here, the emphasis placed upon social reform in terms of family life essentially ‘provided the framework for the emergence of the Victorian bourgeoisie’.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1780s, evangelicals realised the necessity for reforming a code of manners on a national scale. While it was believed that many members of aristocracy were lax in terms of moral behaviour, the evangelicals understood that the ruling classes and the Church of England had to be involved if a new national code was to be successful. In this matter, the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 launched the campaign firmly onto the agenda of the ruling classes. Frances Lady Shelley remarked in her diary: ‘the awakening of the labour classes after the

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<sup>4</sup> Catherine Hall, ‘The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology’, in Sandra Burman (ed.), *Fit Work for Women* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p.15.

<sup>5</sup> Hall, p.15.

first shocks of the French Revolution, made the upper classes tremble'.<sup>6</sup> Although the lower classes could not compete in terms of economic wealth, their force came from strength in numbers; members of the ruling classes were weak compared with the mass quantity of the working classes. However, while the revolution highlighted potential dangers associated with the lower classes, evangelicalism continued to receive only limited support from the landed gentry and the aristocracy; it was ruled by the middle classes.

In addition to signalling a new awareness of the working classes, the Revolution also prompted a number of manuals to be written and published on the subject of women and their relationship with nature. In 1792, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was published by Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797). Here, Wollstonecraft, an early feminist thinker, argued that women (in particular, bourgeois women) should be treated as equal to men in terms of politics, education and legal matters. On the relationship between sex and nature, she noted: 'this is the law of nature; and it doesn't seem to be suspended or repealed in favour of woman. This physical superiority can't be denied – and it is a noble privilege! But men, not content with this natural pre-eminence, try to sink us lower still, so as to make us merely alluring objects for a moment'.<sup>7</sup> Wollstonecraft argued that the social position of women – viewed as unequal to men – was due to environmental rather than biological factors; she advocated that if women received the same education, they would be able to compete on equal social terms with men.

However, Wollstonecraft's argument was not received favourably by evangelical followers. While they naturally recognised that men and women were biologically distinct, they sternly believed that men and women were not equal, and nor should they be treated as so. In terms of improving the provision of education for women, the idea was generally supported but only for the purposes of properly equipping women with the skills to be better mothers and

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p.18.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, ed. by Jonathan Bennett (2010) <<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/wollstonecraft1792.pdf>> [accessed 16 February 2015].

wives.<sup>8</sup> Following the publication of Wollstonecraft's seminal work (in 1792), numerous works emerged that argued against the feminist position of Wollstonecraft, supporting instead the ideas put forward by the evangelicals. The 1790s also saw a focus upon the idea of social hierarchy, not only in terms of class relations but also in terms of gender. Drawing once again upon the idea of the biologically given rather than the socially constructed (see Koskoff 2014), the superiority of men and the sexual division of labour was keenly argued. In this matter, the notion of how societies were organised was clearly an important factor in public consciousness.

### **The Home as Haven?**

Although it has been noted that women in the Victorian era, particularly in England, were expected to conform to a fixed domestic ideology while performing the role of an 'angel in the house', women were often performing a more significant social role than what was generally promoted or accepted. During the relevant period, distinctions between the public and private spheres were made upon gendered lines: the public sphere belonged to working men for whom business endeavours and economic function were a standard part of how to live (this refers, of course, to middle class men). For women, the house acted as a haven, a place that provided the idyllic home setting while simultaneously sheltering women from the perceived dangers that lurked outside. The principal idea here was that the world was viewed as hostile while the home was viewed as loving.<sup>9</sup> But to what extent was this a true reflection of how women lived in the mid- to late nineteenth century?

Elizabeth Langland, a Professor of English, argues that it was not. With reference to a number of Victorian novels, she importantly highlights the more significant roles that women were playing while being largely confined to the home setting. Here, it should be remembered that many middle-class women who were supporters of the evangelical movement, supported this form of domestic ideology. However, Langland believes the central idea concerns the

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<sup>8</sup> Hall, p.22.

<sup>9</sup> Hall, p.24.

running of the household. While men assumed the role of providing for the family financially, women were charged with the notion of administering the funds in order to run the home successfully. Moreover, since the majority of middle-class households would have employed at least one servant, the female role of managing the household was extended to an 'exercise in class management'.<sup>10</sup> In this matter, the female that was held accountable not only for promoting the elevated social class of the family but also for maintaining class boundaries between the family and its working-class servants.

Here, the notion of performed identities is pertinent. While scholars such as Judith Butler have argued that gendered identities are constructed only through performance, the idea of performed identities in general has featured in scholarly writing.<sup>11</sup> Erving Goffman, a Canadian-born sociologist, argues that the way we present ourselves in everyday life is a performance. He states: 'when an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess'.<sup>12</sup> Identity is thus a performance that is required to show, or perhaps convince, others of a sense of self. If the same concept is applied to the notion of women as the upholders and promoters of social class within the Victorian domestic setting, the home can be viewed not as the intended haven but 'as a theat[re] for the staging of a family's social position'.<sup>13</sup> In this matter, Langland importantly highlights the fact that women were able to control the dissemination of knowledge by controlling such discursive practices, and thus they also contributed to the creation of middle-class hegemony in Victorian England.<sup>14</sup> By acknowledging notions of female agency and

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<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Langland, 'Nobody's Angels: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel', *PMLA*, 107/2 (1992), p.291.

<sup>11</sup> For further information, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990). See also Chapter 1.

<sup>12</sup> Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin, 1969), p.28. See also Simon Clarke, 'Culture and Identity', in Tony Bennett and John Frow (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis* (London: SAGE, 2008), pp.510–529.

<sup>13</sup> Langland, p.291.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

subjectivity, this standpoint subverts the traditional analyses of women as household angels, presenting instead a more complicated, comprehensive reality.

However, Victorian women were not without instruction. From the 1830s onwards, a proliferation of household help manuals (or etiquette guides) were published for the purpose of teaching people, particularly women, how to behave in social situations. Although the earliest nineteenth-century models were published in the 1830s, such as *Hints on Etiquette and the Uses of Society* by Charles William Day and *The Spirit of Etiquette, or Politeness Exemplified* by Lady de S. (published in 1836 and 1837 respectively), the earliest behaviour books were published in the sixteenth century. For example, Erasmus's *De Civilitate Morum Puellum* was published in 1530 and Della Casa's *Il Galateo* was published in 1558.<sup>15</sup> According to Andrew St George, the sixteenth-century books related to those published during the Victorian period since they were concerned with the idea that society could be preserved and controlled by 'courtesy and humanity, or by standards of behaviour rigorously adhered to and universally acknowledged'.<sup>16</sup> The etiquette books produced in the latter period covered a wide range of topics including the introduction of new individuals, the duration of house visits, the art of conversation and attendance at balls. Moreover, concepts of dress not only became important in terms of what to wear and when, but also how to wear the stipulated garments. For example, according to the popular *Book of Household Management* (1861) by Isabella Beeton, 'a lady paying a visit may remove her boa or neckerchief; but neither her shawl nor bonnet'.<sup>17</sup> As the topics mentioned above suggest, these manuals were designed for the middle classes. Moreover, such etiquette books provided a set of class-based rules that served a double purpose of consolidating an elevated social position while excluding others from such a rank. They were not designed to teach those in the lower classes to become socially mobile.

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew St George, *The Descent of Manners: Etiquette, Rules and The Victorians* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), p.3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.3–4.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Langland, p.293.



## The 'Welsh Mam'

While the discussion thus far has focussed principally on the ideological values promoted throughout Victorian England, Wales was also affected by the new focus on family roles in the nineteenth century. Prior to the industrialisation of Wales, working-class women were able to contribute to the economy of the family through their involvement in agricultural work, including animal husbandry and 'driving' horse-drawn ploughs. In fact, in 1851, 29.3 per cent of women in Wales were employed in agricultural work as opposed to just 7.5 per cent in England.<sup>18</sup> However, the role of women was to be transformed dramatically by rapid industrialisation in Wales (particularly in the South). From this point in the mid-nineteenth century, men were afforded new economic opportunities working in coal and iron mines while women were excluded not least because they did not possess the physical strength to be able to work in such heavy industries. In fact, the Mines and Collieries Act of 1842 prohibited all females and boys less than ten years of age from working in underground coalmines. Such a development not only forced females back into the home (a private space) but also made them economically dependent upon their husbands. Women became the stereotypical 'Welsh Mam'.<sup>19</sup>

According to the Welsh historian, Gwyn A. Williams, the nineteenth century saw not only the creation of a stereotypical image of the Welsh miner but also a female equivalent, the Welsh Mam.<sup>20</sup> But what did the typical Welsh Mam do? While her husband was at work, the Welsh Mam took responsibility for looking after the home, for cooking meals for the whole family and preparing bath water to wash the blackened body of her husband after a gruelling day of mining. She was, of course, a mother; following her husband, her sons also worked in the mines. Although she did not contribute economically, she controlled the family budget. In this manner, Welsh working-class women assumed a distinctive role with the domestic sphere,

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<sup>18</sup> L. J. Williams and Dot Jones, 'Women at Work in Nineteenth Century Wales', *Llafur: The Journal of the Society of Welsh Labour Historians*, 3/3 (1982), p.24.

<sup>19</sup> 'Mam' is the Welsh word for mother.

<sup>20</sup> See Gwyn A. Williams, 'Women Workers in Wales, 1968–1982', *Welsh History Review*, 11/4 (1983), pp.530–548.

where, Williams states, they could ‘exercise a real authority’.<sup>21</sup> However, such a statement is refuted by Beddoe who believes that women were not afforded a sense of agency. She argues:

the myth is that [the Welsh miner and the Welsh Mam] had equal power or even that the Mam was the dominant power. The business of the miner handing over his pay packet to his wife is often cited as evidence of this. Actually in doing this the wage earner was passing over the burden of managing the household on his [limited] wages.<sup>22</sup>

That being said, both Williams and Beddoe stress the need to locate the idea of the Welsh Mam within a historical context, namely nineteenth-century industrial Wales, since figures representing the Welsh Mam did not exist in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is for this reason that Beddoe, in particular, insists that this stereotype is recognised as a nineteenth-century development ‘lest people think she has always been around’.<sup>23</sup> Williams takes the idea further than simply reflecting a development in the social roles of Welsh women by suggesting that the Welsh Mam (as well as the Welsh miner) was ‘invented’. He states: ‘two archetypal and quasi mythical figures loom through the mist of our memory of Wales; the Welsh miner and the Welsh mam. Both were invented in the nineteenth century’.<sup>24</sup> It must be argued, however, that the Welsh miner was not invented at all. Instead, he existed as a necessary feature of a newly-expanded capitalist mode of production. Since men were required to alter their social roles to meet the demands of a burgeoning economy, women’s roles adapted logically to fit within this framework: that is, the limited work opportunities for women required a change in their social and economic spheres.

While it cannot be denied that male workers were an essential part of economic growth in Wales throughout the nineteenth century, it is important to note also that the development of the economy brought about a class-based social hierarchy. In this matter, wealthy coal owners had both social power due to their financial status and also political power since male capitalists

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.531.

<sup>22</sup> Beddoe (1986), p.231.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.230.

<sup>24</sup> Gwyn A. Williams (1983), p.530.

also controlled the economic output of the country. The Welsh miner was thus ‘the symbol of wealth generated in Wales’.<sup>25</sup> However, for the men themselves, poor working conditions and low pay shaded the benefits of a capitalist mode of production. To combat such issues, miners and colliers participated actively in strikes. Such labour activism was not unique to Wales; in 1869, the Amalgamated Association of Miners (AAM) was established in Lancashire for the purpose of offering a centralised organisation that was able to support strikes arranged in local areas.

On 2 October 1871, the AAM held a conference at the Drill Hall in Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales to bring together representatives of coalminers from both England and Wales to discuss pertinent issues such as the sliding scale wage system (see Chapter 4), contractual hours and working conditions. The areas of England that were represented were: Farmworth and Kearsley, North Stafford and Worsley. The Welsh representatives came from: Ogmore, Rhosllanerchrugog, New Tredegar, Abertillery, Rhondda, Aberdare, Pengam, Caerphilly, Rhymney and Merthyr.<sup>26</sup> The outcome of the conference, which was also attended by the President of the Parliamentary Deputation of Miners in the United Kingdom, Mr Macdonald, was that all districts were encouraged ‘to prepare the way for an eight hours per day movement by agitating to remove such evils as may stand in the way thereof’.<sup>27</sup> Although pertinent issues were clearly discussed in the early 1870s, tense relationships between coal owners and their workers continued to exist into the twentieth century. In 1898, strained relations between the two resulted in a strike that once again targeted the sliding scale. Although the motion was defeated, the strike resulted in the establishment of another trade union, the South Wales Miners’ Federation (dissolved in 1945), which was affiliated with the Miners’ Federation of Great Britain in 1899. Though the Welsh miners could be seen as a symbol of the country’s economic wealth (as suggested by Beddoe), the participation of working class men in labour activism promoted

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<sup>25</sup> Beddoe (1986), p.228.

<sup>26</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 7 October 1871.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

them also as objectors of the capitalist mode of production; they were working for but also against the capitalist demands of the coal owners.

But what did this mean for Welsh women? In a social hierarchy that was dominated by middle-class coal owners, Welsh women held the least favourable position due to their exclusion from manual work (making them unable to contribute not only to the country's economy but also to the household budget) and, by extension, their gender. Moreover, the treatment of the men in the workplace impacted upon women adversely in the home; women were doubly oppressed, first by their social class (as working class) and second because of their gender (as female). As one miner's wife explained: 'we were slaves because they were slaves to the mine owners'.<sup>28</sup> But is this a fair reflection of women's lives in nineteenth-century Wales? To what extent were women afforded the opportunity to overstep the boundaries relating to domestic responsibility and social behaviour? Were they really confined to the home?

### **The Blue Books and the True 'Cymraes'**

In January 1850, Evan Jones ('Ieuan Gwynedd', 1820–1852), a Baptist minister and a journalist, published the first periodical designed especially for women in Wales. *Y Gymraes* (*The Welshwoman*) was published in Cardiff and was intended to 'elevate the female sex in every respect – social, moral and religious'.<sup>29</sup> Although women in Wales were perceived to be metaphorically silent or 'culturally invisible', a report produced in 1847 called into question not only the social behaviour of women (although males also formed part of the report) but, in particular, the ways in which they were educated. The results of the report on the 'state of education in Wales' were published in three blue books – each reflecting distinct geographical locations – which were presented to the Government. Since good education was believed to lessen the likelihood of poor social behaviour, William Williams (1788–1865), who was a native

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<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Beddoe (1986), p.232.

<sup>29</sup> English translation of the original Welsh text printed in Sian Rhiannon Williams, 'The True "Cymraes": Images of Women in Women's Nineteenth-Century Welsh Periodicals', in Angela V. John (ed.), *Our Mothers' Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History, 1830–1939* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), p.69.

of Llanpumsaint in Carmarthenshire (yet employed as a Member of Parliament for Coventry), moved an address before the House of Commons calling for such an inquiry.

What the 1847 Education Report (known also as the 'Blue Books' or the 'Treachery of the Blue Books') concluded, however, was that the women of Wales were ignorant, immoral, unchaste and uneducated. The Commissioners targeted the education of Welsh women for a number of reasons: first, the fact that women occupied the weakest social position indicated to the Commissioners that they would be more malleable than their male counterparts; second, they hoped that a manipulation of the female division would later influence Welsh men who would propagate the female social values; and, third, women were the educators (at least at home) of the next generation. As well as defending the reputation of Welsh women, Ieuan Gwynedd echoed the idea that an improvement in education would be a powerful agent for social reform in general. In his editorial statement for the first issue of *Y Gymraes*, Ieuan Gwynedd remarked that: 'up until now, the women of Wales have not received the attention that their situation warrants, nor have they enjoyed equal opportunities with the menfolk of their country. [...] Our intention is to cooperate with the educational establishments of our time to produce faithful maids, virtuous women, thrifty wives and intelligent mothers'.<sup>30</sup>

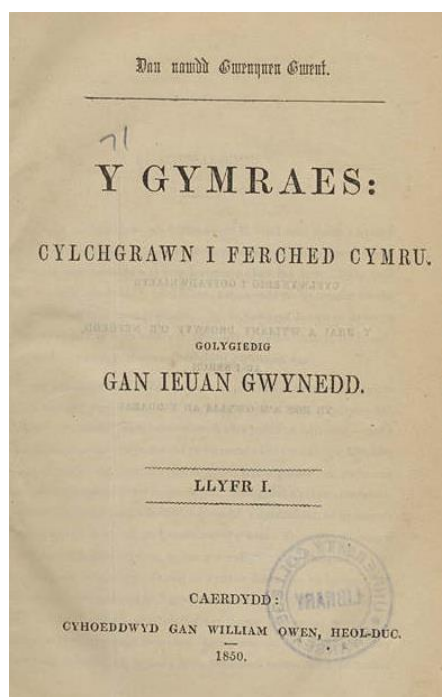
*Y Gymraes* was aimed principally at working-class women. However, the creation of a monthly periodical in Welsh for this social class was problematic since literacy skills were not as advanced in women as they were in men. To highlight the extent of the deficiency, out of a total of 3,224 marriages recorded at ten centres in Wales in 1844, only 29 per cent of the brides were able to sign their name on the marriage register.<sup>31</sup> Ieuan Gwynedd was not deterred and with the support of a Cardiff-based publisher, William Owen, and the financial sponsorship of Lady Llanover (known also as 'Augusta Hall' or 'Gwenynen Gwent' ('The Bee of Gwent')) he was

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<sup>30</sup> English translation printed in S. R. Williams, p.69.

<sup>31</sup> S. R. Williams, p.72.

motivated to help the women of Wales (see Plate 7.1).<sup>32</sup> The patronage of Lady Llanover is important here. Although removed from the intended readership in terms of social class and religion, she whole-heartedly supported the preservation of the Welsh language as well as the importance of promoting an ‘ideal’ image of the Welsh woman: that is, one dressed in national costume (as discussed in Chapter 5). Moreover, extracts of her 1834 prize-winning *eisteddfod* essay concerning native dress were reproduced in the second instalment of *Y Gymraes*.



**Plate 7.1:** *Y Gymraes*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1850<sup>33</sup>

Much of the content of the periodical was aimed at creating a prototypical ‘Cymraes’. It is clear from the subjects discussed that in order to be viewed in such an idealistic way, a woman had to be skilled in domestic management and cookery, as well as being educated, modest, loyal and religious. However, it seems that the principle aim of the periodical was not to create educated, independent women, but rather to equip women with the skills to become more

<sup>32</sup> The words ‘*dan nawdd Gwenynen Gwent*’ printed at the top of Plate 7.1 read ‘under the sponsorship of the Bee of Gwent’ in English.

<sup>33</sup> ‘*Y Gymraes* (The Welshwoman)’, Gathering the Jewels: The Website for Welsh Cultural History <<http://education.gtgj.org.uk/en/item1/26962>> [accessed 1 February 2015].

successful in the domestic sphere; to become a better wife and a better mother. This can be highlighted with an example from the second volume of *Y Gymraes* (February 1850):

If your husband happens to come home feeling rather miserable, do not make a frightful face and ask him, 'What is wrong with you?' Do not persist in bothering him; if he wants to let you know, he will be sure to tell you in due course [...] Do not let him find that his shirt collars have buttons missing each week. This is often the cause of many a family storm. See to it that the collars are as perfect as possible, and if they do not entirely please him, remember that men are permitted to complain about the state of their shift collars.<sup>34</sup>

Welsh women, like their English counterparts, were thus also expected to play the role of the 'angel in the house'. However, there was one crucial difference: their social class. In England, etiquette manuals and domestic guides were aimed specifically at maintaining a bourgeois view of family life, with a male breadwinner and a dependant female wife. In Wales, the situation was different. *Y Gymraes* presented the same domestic ideology to the working classes as a way of promoting a vision of the ideal 'Cymraes' to which the women could aspire. In this manner, *Y Gymraes* represented a working-class adaptation of a bourgeois domestic ideology. However, this was a problematic stance to take since the articles were not only written predominantly by men (who were themselves aspiring to the middle classes) but also because the content of the periodical was perceived to be irrelevant to many working-class women in Wales who had little time to read or to educate themselves.<sup>35</sup> From this perspective, it is perhaps unsurprising that *Y Gymraes* ceased publication in the autumn of 1851. The final issue of the periodical included a note from the editor, Ieuan Gwynedd, stating that '*Y Gymraes* was never supported by the women of Wales'.<sup>36</sup>

That being said, the short-lived publication of *Y Gymraes* did not signal the end of periodicals for women in Wales. Twenty eight years after the last issue of *Y Gymraes* was published, a new attempt was made to establish a magazine for Welsh women under the editorial leadership of Sarah Jane Rees ('Cranogwen', 1839–1916). However, Sarah was not a typical

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<sup>34</sup> S. R. Williams, p.74.

<sup>35</sup> S. R. Williams, p.76.

<sup>36</sup> English translation provided in S. R. Williams, p.78. It should be noted that this was not wholly true. The first issue sold 3,000 copies priced at two pence each.

Welsh woman of the late nineteenth century. Born in Llangrannog, Cardiganshire, she was the daughter of John Rees, a ship's captain, and had proved herself to be an independent thinker from a young age. Eschewing instruction in sewing and cookery at school, instead she learned Latin, astronomy and navigation; the latter was especially useful when Sarah insisted her father allow her to accompany him at sea.<sup>37</sup> At a later age, Sarah became a teacher of mathematics and navigation which she taught to budding mariners (usually male) at schools in Cardiganshire, Liverpool and London, before returning to Llangrannog in 1860 to become Mistress of her old school (Pontgarreg), a post she held until 1866.

During her time in London, Sarah received a Master's certificate from a nautical training school, a qualification that not only allowed her to command a ship in any part of the world but one that was also rarely earned by women.<sup>38</sup> Considering the successful acquisition of skills that were deemed to relate more to the masculine rather than the feminine sphere, it is perhaps surprising that Sarah became the editor of the new magazine entitled *Y Frythones* (*The Female Briton*) in 1879. Beddoe compounds the idea that Sarah did not resemble the stereotypical image of the 'Welsh Mam' (nor did she follow the domestic ideology of the 'angel in the house') by stating that she was a 'tall, dark, striking woman [who was] strong-willed and supremely confident'.<sup>39</sup> However, Sarah's interests in religion (as a Sunday school and Band of Hope teacher) and moral behaviour (particularly in terms of temperance) ensured that she was ideally suited to influence the women of Wales.

Like *Y Gymraes*, the aim of *Y Frythones*, which was also published in Welsh, was to instruct working-class women both in education and morality. That being said, the ideals of femininity presented in *Y Frythones* did not seem to have been altered in the years since those of the pioneer publication; once again, the ideal Welsh woman, or perhaps British woman as suggested by the magazine's title, was based on a singular image that reflected the structure of a patriarchal society

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<sup>37</sup> *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 30 June 1916; S. R. Williams, p.80.

<sup>38</sup> Deirdre Beddoe, 'Rees, Sarah Jane', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography <[www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com)> [accessed 28 February 2015].

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



in which women were expected to be pure, virtuous wives who were dependent upon their husbands. Given the educational and social background of its editor, it is surprising that this form of domestic ideology continued to be promoted as an aspiration for working-class women. However, *Y Frythones* did acknowledge at times the change in women's work patterns in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Some articles highlighted the notion that women could break out of the confines of the family home to earn their own living through paid work. In September 1880, a writer named 'Olwen' published an essay in *Y Frythones* entitled 'Merchedyn Enill Bywoliaeth' (English, 'Women Earning a Living') which stated that the opportunities for women to 'earn an independent and respectable living [were] being improved and extended gradually and surely'.<sup>40</sup> It is interesting that Olwen notes that such changes were happening in Britain, not Wales. Here, her choice of locale not only indicates a wider sense of consciousness in terms of national identification but also that attitudes towards women's work were adapting in England as well as Wales. However, according to the Welsh historian Sian Rhiannon Williams, Olwen's discussion was referring to 'a privileged class of women'.<sup>41</sup> Once again, *Y Frythones* had failed to appeal fully to its preferred market.

Although *Y Frythones* did not address fully the concept that women had an increasing desire (or perhaps financial need) to undertake paid work outside of the home setting or discuss available opportunities for doing so, the debate surrounding such issues was keenly fought in newspaper columns. For example, on 1 July 1887, *The Cambrian* published an article entitled 'The Right of Women to Work'. Here, an unknown author argued against the motion that was being put before the British Government; that is, that women were to be prohibited from working within the pit banks of coal mines (known later as the Coal Mines Regulations Act). Supporting the proposal, William Abraham ('Mabon', 1842–1922), a trade unionist, Liberal/Labour politician and MP, remarked that:

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<sup>40</sup> English translation provided in S. R. Williams, p.82.

<sup>41</sup> S. R. Williams, p.82.

women's labour about mines was doomed. [...] Human feeling was against it, and before long – it would not be many years – the public feeling would say that women were angels of humanity, and should not be allowed to be employed about mines, amongst the grease, and the coal, and dirt and other disagreeable surroundings.<sup>42</sup>

Here, Mabon's term 'angels of humanity' is seemingly synonymous with the ideology behind the 'angel in the house'. Countering Mabon's views, the author asks 'are not the women who sort dust heaps and perform all sorts of foul drudgery angels of humanity?'.<sup>43</sup>

The type of work that women were undertaking at the pit-brow of mines included sweeping floors around the blast furnaces, making bricks and arranging them in wagons; for those who were less physically able, lighter tasks were assigned in the form of carrying accounts books between the collieries and their head offices.<sup>44</sup> According to contemporary newspaper sources published in May 1886, there were 981 women employed in Welsh pit brows with approximately 150 to 200 of them employed in Tredegar, South Wales.<sup>45</sup> Such women were more popularly known as 'tip girls' or 'patch girls'. In addition to commenting upon the duties expected of women in such circumstances, their choice of sartorial code is also discussed. Invoking the national costume (although such references are not explicitly made), the women's 'uniform' comprised of: a smock or pinafore large enough to conceal a dress below; a shawl or handkerchief placed over the head to protect from dust; and, a felt bonnet (often decorated with an ostrich feather) placed over the headdress. However, accounts differ on whether the women wore trousers to complete the work.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to their sex and what they wore, there was one other feature about the women that was discussed in the press: their music. In addition to belonging to a social class that

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<sup>42</sup> *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 1 July 1887.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 15 May 1886.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> According to *Cardiff Times* (15 May 1886), 'trousers [were] not included in the costume of the tip girls in Wales'. However, an article published in the *Weekly Mail* (9 July 1887) entitled 'Welsh Pit-Brow Women in Working Dress' discusses an image of pit brow women from Ynysfeio Colliery (Treherbert) taken by the newly-established Cardiff Amateur Photographic Society (formed in 1886). Here, it is noted that each of the women's costumes were almost identical and that 'the women invariably wear trousers, but being a little more modest than their Lancashire sisters, do not show them'. In Lancashire, pit brow girls were viewed at this time as 'a vital source of income'. For further information about the female identities associated with mining in England, see Carol E. Morgan, *Women Workers and Gendered Identities, 1835–1913* (London: Routledge, 2001).

was perceived as both 'industrious' and 'moral', the pit-brow girls spent their spare time engaging in musical activities, principally singing. While such girls undoubtedly belonged to the working classes, it is interesting to note that the label 'working class' was not utilised frequently in the press although discussions of the women's work invariably signalled their social background; the women were instead referred to as belonging to a nameless 'class'.<sup>47</sup> In terms of music participation, it was not only outside of working hours that women were engaged in singing with one newspaper report stating: 'it [was] not an uncommon occurrence, when passing a colliery, to hear selections from the oratorios, some of the vocalists being blessed with superb and well-trained voices'.<sup>48</sup> While it could be argued that such observations related only to male colliery workers, it must be noted not only that the observation was printed under the heading 'Welsh Pit-Brow Women in Working Dress' but also that the vocal sonorities associated with male and female choral singing are distinctive and therefore not easily confused. Supporting the notion that pit-brow girls engaged in music, another newspaper reported:

[Unlike the Lancashire girls] the Welsh girls are not grave; they are gay and buoyant, ready with a smile, and sing heartily at their work and on their way home. Visitors to the collieries can testify that the pit-brow rings again with the sound of the rich voices for which the Welsh are famous. The girls gather in a group during any temporary stoppage, and sing in parts plaintive Welsh airs or simple hymns.<sup>49</sup>

While the suggestion that Welsh women were persistently happy working on the pit brow is likely to be overstated considering the poor working conditions associated with colliery work in this timeframe, the notion that the female workers engaged in music is noteworthy. Recalling the earlier discussion of male glee clubs associated with coalmining (see Chapter 4), choral singing in Wales became associated over time with a singular icon that represented a masculine view not only of musical practice but also of nationhood. By contrast, the fact those pit brow women were contributing towards the country's economic output as well as being involved in

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<sup>47</sup> *Weekly Mail*, 9 July 1887.

<sup>48</sup> *Weekly Mail*, 9 July 1887.

<sup>49</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 15 May 1886.

vocal practices contests the familiar iconography in terms of the gendered division of both labour (these were not ‘angels in the house’) and choral singing. However, the sources on female singing at the pit-brow are unfortunately scarce, not least because the debate concerning whether women should be allowed to work on the pit brows (a concern that was pertinent to women in Wales and in England) was more hotly debated in newspaper columns. However, the sources mentioned above suggest that the repertoire performed by the women in the mines was seemingly diverse, including oratorios, hymns and Welsh airs; such repertoire is consistent with that sung at *eisteddfod* competitions and in concert performances.

### **Angels in the House?**

Since the notion of the ‘angel in the house’ was aimed principally at the upper classes (with periodicals such as *Y Gymraes* attempting to persuade the working classes to aspire), it is pertinent to discuss how the aforementioned female choirs and their conductors, Madame Clara Novello Davies and Madame Hannah Hughes-Thomas, conformed to this social stereotype. On the one hand, each of the singers from the two choirs reflected the type of ideal behaviour promoted to women in the late Victorian era. They represented a sense of nationhood that was visual (in terms of their costumes), aural (in terms of their repertoire and general linguistic skill) and social (reflecting good morals); although the women were not from the working classes, their participation in choral music imitated a working-class desire to sing as a means of galvanising communal spirit at a time of social unrest in Wales. Moreover, the women acted as role models to whom young girls could aspire.

In this matter, one girl named Alice Llewellyn from Shamokin, Pennsylvania penned a lengthy letter (dated 7 December) to the *Evening Express* (30 December 1895) describing her impression of the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir (conducted by Clara) at her home town. She admitted: ‘When I heard that the ‘Royal Welsh Ladies Choir’ was coming to Shamokin I was not at all interested. [...] hitherto my experience of my father’s countrymen had largely been with the

kind that Wales don't miss very much when they leave'.<sup>50</sup> Alice's father was a Welsh émigré and Pennsylvania was, as previously noted, a destination for many Welsh emigrants. However, Alice's negativity towards her father's native land prior to the choir's visit was surprising since she also noted that history (and her father) had taught her that Welsh people were 'brave, earnest [and] patriotic'.<sup>51</sup> She stated also that she had 'often heard of their honesty, industry and strength of character' and that the Welsh people were generally a 'music-loving nation'.<sup>52</sup> Although the social class to which Alice belonged is unknown, her descriptions of the people of Wales seemingly relate to a working-class reading of society. However, it must be wondered: if Alice believed such information, why did she act in such a nonchalant manner prior to the choir's visit?

The arrival of the choir did much to alter any negative views that Alice had formed about the people of Wales. In particular, she noted upon meeting Clara and the choir's accompanist Miss Winifred Evans<sup>53</sup> (daughter of Dr John Evans of Canton, Cardiff) that she 'instinctively knew that [she] was in the presence of real ladies, cultured, and refined. Like the warriors of old, "they came", we saw, "they conquered"'.<sup>54</sup> However, it is clear that it was not the choir's sound alone that impressed Alice; rather than using positive adjectives that she was sure other writers had employed to describe the choir, she focussed upon the choristers. In particular, she believed that the women were ideal representatives for Wales, an idea that she stated on more than one occasion. In this matter, a notion of cultural identity was stirred in this diasporic location for both Alice and other members of the local community. She explained:

We are glad the choir came to us, for it has been the means of elevating the Welsh as a nation to the people [of Shamokin]. Everybody who possibly could started to hunt for Welsh ancestors, for we all wanted to belong to a country which could send such representatives across the ocean.

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<sup>50</sup> *Evening Express*, 30 December 1895.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> According to accounts in the press, Miss Winifred Evans had been a long-standing accompanist for Clara's choir and 'ha[d] not missed a single concert given by the choir' on home soil or abroad. In 1894, the year preceding this visit to America, Winifred was given a 'handsome upright grand pianoforte' to recognise her gratuitous services to the choir. See *Evening Express*, 24 September 1894.

<sup>54</sup> *Evening Express*, 30 December 1895.

I always had felt proud of my Welsh blood, and, if pride can grow, I am prouder than ever of it today. [...] America said, 'Long live the country that can send such women to us'.<sup>55</sup>

While it is apparent that the choir members did indeed function as models to which young girls could aspire, reports highlighting less than exemplary behaviour were also published in the press. For example, in 1894, a very public argument emerged between two members of Clara's Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir, namely Hilda Evans and Gwen Cosslett. On 7 May, Hilda Evans sent a letter to the *Evening Express* stating that an earlier article concerning a Scotch-themed entertainment concert to be performed by a Mr Kennedy and Miss Gwen Cosslett contained false information since Miss Cosslett was not the soprano soloist of the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir. She explained: 'The lady in question joined the choir formed for competing at Chicago, but for reasons of her own resigned, after attending a few rehearsals. It is not fair to the members of the [choir], especially the soloists, that Miss Cosslett should claim a share in the glories and honours [...], without enduring the fatigues and anxieties attendant upon the American trip'.<sup>56</sup>

However, a reply from Gwen Cosslett was published the following day in the same newspaper in which Miss Cosslett states that she had been a member of Clara's choir since its formation in 1888 and had frequently sung solos at the choir's concerts. In this matter, Gwen's claim is confirmed since she was a notable member of the choir when it appeared in London for the first time (at St James' Hall) in June 1891. Here, Miss Cosslett not only sang solos but also a duet entitled 'Fare thee Well' with Miss Kate Morgan, which was described as 'charmingly rendered' and 'vociferously re-demanded'.<sup>57</sup> Further, since such words were published in the *Evening Express* three years prior to the Hilda Evans saga, it is understandable that the newspaper would refer to Gwen Cosslett as a soloist of Clara's choir. Strengthening her case, Gwen added: 'seeing the notice of my being soloist [...] I mentioned the matter to Mrs. Clara Novello Davies

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> *Evening Express*, 7 May 1894.

<sup>57</sup> *Evening Express*, 26 June 1891.

with a view to having it contradicted [since Gwen had admittedly not taken part in recent proceedings and had missed the Chicago trip due to ‘scholastic duties’], but she desired me *not to do so*, thus showing that she still considered me one of them, and that the choir was not likely to suffer in any way by the association’.<sup>58</sup>

However, Hilda Evans remained unsatisfied. On a third consecutive day, the *Evening Express* afforded Miss Evans another opportunity to discuss the matter further in a second letter that doubled the length of her first. Here, she argued that Clara’s Welsh Ladies’ Choir and her *Royal* Welsh Ladies’ Choir (the members of which competed at Chicago) were distinct, although there was naturally a crossover of members between the two. In an attempt to justify her argument regarding the membership of the choir in general and Miss Gwen Cosslett in particular, she recalls Clara who reportedly said: ‘You thirty girls who compose the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir now have worked hard and well to obtain the honours we have got, and we don’t wish and won’t have outsiders sharing in our honours’.<sup>59</sup> In this respect, Hilda’s words are delivered with a touch of irony since she had previously stated: ‘if Madame Davies wishes Miss Cosslett to sing under the title of [...] the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir nothing more need be said’.<sup>60</sup>

Yet, Hilda Evans continued to say more. Although she sought clarification on the matter from the choir’s manager (rather than Madame Clara herself), Hilda assures the readers that her letters do not reflect a personal attack on Miss Cosslett. Moreover, she undermines the leadership and authority of the choir’s conductress since she stresses controversially that the right and power to add members of the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir lay solely with Her Majesty Queen Victoria and not with Clara Novello Davies. As expected, this second letter from Hilda Evans provoked a further reaction from Gwen Cosslett, which she described as an ‘undesirable

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<sup>58</sup> *Evening Express*, 8 May 1894. Italics reproduced from the original text.

<sup>59</sup> *Evening Express*, 9 May 1894.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

duty'.<sup>61</sup> The following day (the fourth consecutive day that the matter was afforded column space in the *Evening Express*), Miss Cosslett congratulated Miss Evans for employing 'some traces of courtesy' though doubted Hilda's ability to recognise facts or to employ common sense. Regarding the latter, she highlighted the notion that cognate royal societies elected (and replenished) their members through 'ordinary methods' (presumably by audition or based upon established reputation in musical societies).<sup>62</sup>

However, it was the choir's reputation that most concerned Gwen Cosslett in terms of the very public 'personal and invidious attack' she received from Hilda Evans; such powerful words confirming that the letters were received unfavourably despite Hilda's assurance that the matter was not personal. Gwen explained:

But having regard to [the choir's] public reputation, I venture to suggest to [Hilda] that so long as she continues to rush daily into newspaper columns, where it is said 'even angels fear to tread', she should escort herself to the utmost to keep some little restraint upon that overwhelming humility [...]. I think she would be better advised to let responsible officials speak for [the choir] when necessary, and to at least ask some kind friend to revise her letter for her before she sends to the newspapers personal and invidious attacks on her fellows.<sup>63</sup>

Considering the debate as a whole, it is interesting to note that while Hilda's initial letter was concerned principally with the established reputation of the choir (specifically, that she did not wish 'outsiders' to benefit from its success), her published correspondence was likely to have been more damaging to the character of the choir. By 'push[ing] her vagaries into public exhibition' (as Gwen described Hilda's actions), she contests the established and expected codes of behaviour for women in late nineteenth-century Britain; this was, once again, not the action of an 'angel in the house' since such debates by women rarely occurred in the public domain.<sup>64</sup> However, music performance in general did not reflect the domestic ideology presented to the women; pursuing a career as a professional or semi-professional musician was particularly

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<sup>61</sup> *Evening Express*, 10 May 1894.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



difficult for ‘middle- and upper-class women who were firmly discouraged from any kind of public exposure or career’.<sup>65</sup>

In this matter, female soloists as well as members of female choirs subverted the widely-asserted notion that they should be confined to the private, domestic sphere. At the same time in the late nineteenth century, there was a change in the social behaviour of some women: they were self-aware, determined and enjoyed a greater freedom than their predecessors. Musical careers for women began to become plausible, although Sophie Fuller, a British musicologist, importantly notes that such careers were viewed as ‘increasingly acceptable for a young, single woman, however, remained prohibited once she married, unless she married another musician or a particularly broadminded husband’.<sup>66</sup> It is worth noting that both Clara Novello Davies and Hannah Hughes-Thomas maintained their musical careers once married.

It was not only Clara’s choir that was highlighted in the public arena for displaying behaviour that was less than exemplary. Amid the glowing concert reviews for the choir and her personal involvement in political developments (due to her husband’s profession), Madame Hughes-Thomas was featured in the press for a very different reason in April 1915; it was reported that she had failed to pay a salary to three of her singers, namely Miss Dorothea Smith, Miss Peggy Herbert and Miss Esther Wilkins, while on tour in America.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, she was being sued for not doing so. According to the newspaper report, which described the incident as a ‘rift in the lute’, the women were successful in their claim and £45 was awarded to Miss Smith and £35 to each of the other women.<sup>68</sup> There is a broader issue to discuss here: remuneration. While issues of remuneration have arisen in earlier chapters, this example brings to the fore the notion that financial rewards were an important factor for the members of Madame Hughes-Thomas’s choir; singing in the choir brought more than social interaction and personal

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<sup>65</sup> Sophie Fuller, “‘The Finest Voice of the Century’: Clara Butt and Other Concert-Hall and Drawing-Room Signers of Fin-de-siècle Britain”, in Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (eds), *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p.315.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p.316.

<sup>67</sup> *Glamorgan Gazette*, 23 April 1915.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* Since the details regarding money are sparse, a rate of pay (for example, per concert) is unknown.

enjoyment. However, it should be remembered that details regarding funding for the American tours were not discussed in the press (nor are they seemingly available from archival sources), and therefore a discussion about remuneration for the choristers was not only rare but, significantly, negative too. Following the receipt of their money, the three singers withdrew from the remainder of the tour with Madame Hughes-Thomas in favour of touring the eastern states of America with a Miss Ada Cosgrove, a Canadian singer and entertainer. The party hoped to conclude the expedition at the Panama Exposition in San Francisco.<sup>69</sup>

But what did these instances that contested the ‘ideal’ vision of female behaviour do for the public reputation of the two choirs? In short, the answer is not a lot. Each of the choirs continued to perform regularly following the publication of the aforementioned letters and articles, although it is important to note that negative images of the choirs and their members (particularly in terms of social behaviour) did exist, albeit scarcely, in the press. Interestingly, in both examples the newspapers remained impartial: in the first case relating to Hilda Evans and Gwen Cosslett, the letters from the women were reproduced without additional comments from the editor; in the second, the newspaper remained objective despite Madame Hughes-Thomas unlawfully withholding salaries from her singers. Although the two examples apparently did not alter the reception of the choir in subsequent years, they do contradict two key aspects of choral singing: that is, music as a moral activity and music, specifically choral singing, as a form of communal relations and solidarity.

### **The Silent Angels are Gone: Women Aiding Men**

While the expectations of how women should behave in paternalistic societies made women assume subdominant positions, there were times when the efforts of women did much to support men, financially and emotionally; an inversion of the conventional vision of family life

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<sup>69</sup> The Panama-Pacific International Exposition (open 20 February 1915 to December 1915) was a World’s Fair held in San Francisco to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal and also to showcase the city after it had recovered from the 1906 earthquake and fires that killed approximately 3,000 people and destroyed the majority of the city.

within which the male was exclusively responsible for financial support. In particular, it was the onset of the First World War that spurred women, mostly those with musical talent, to produce ways of supporting men that were fighting on the front line. For women like Clara Novello Davies, who had built successful careers upon teaching singing and concert performances, the opportunities for continuing such activities (especially the former) during the war were not as forthcoming. Thus, with a wealth of musical experience and an unexpected amount of spare time, women focussed their efforts on what they could do to help.

Stating that she could ‘move a baton better than a knitting needle’, one of Clara’s first tasks was to raise money to build a YMCA hut in Barry, a town located ten miles from Cardiff in the Vale of Glamorgan.<sup>70</sup> Although founded in London in 1844 by a drapery worker named George Williams, it was during the war years (1914–1918) that the YMCA (or Young Men’s Christian Association) offered its most valuable service to the troops by providing a crucial yet heartening link between the fighting fronts and home. In addition to aiding communication between the two areas (in the form of letters and postcards), the association is known for its construction of huts that not only provided sustenance and accommodation where it was needed, but more importantly acted as centres for recreational activities. With YMCA huts constructed throughout camps and barracks of the United Kingdom, as well as almost 800 in France and Flanders, an army of voluntary workers was called upon to provide tea and solace for the soldiers.

The construction of the YMCA hut in Barry was dependent upon sufficient funds being raised by Clara. In this matter, she utilised her skill to ‘move a baton’ by organising and conducting a number of fundraising concerts in the district (see, for example, Plate 7.2). However, it is somewhat surprising that the Royal Welsh Ladies’ Choir is not utilised for this purpose. Instead, she called upon solo singers, many of whom had gained a reputation in the London musical scene. On 13 October 1915, a concert held at the Parish Hall in Dinas Powys

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<sup>70</sup> Novello Davies, p.206.

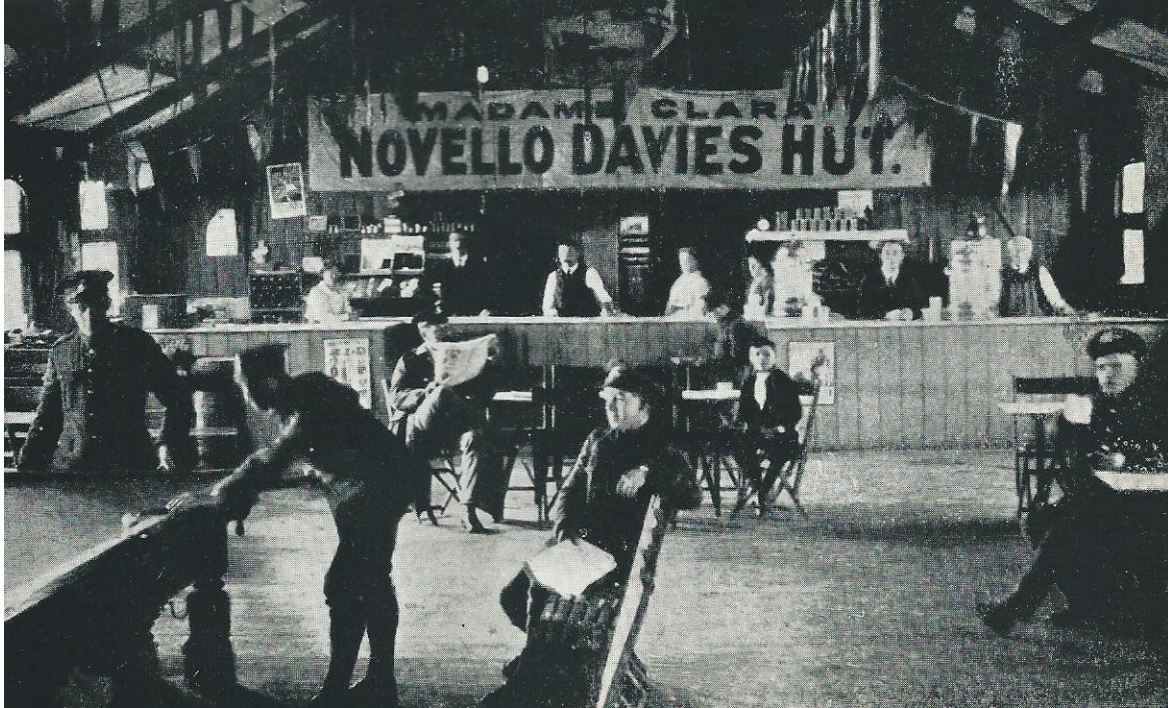
(also situated in the Vale of Glamorgan) featured a number of London-based artists: first, Miss Sybil Vane (known more popularly as Lizzie Jenkins in Wales),<sup>71</sup> a Welsh soprano and a pupil of Clara, Sybil had performed at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden; second, Miss Theresa Freebairn, one of the choristers to travel to Chicago with Clara as part of the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir; third, Mr Laurence Leonard, a singer who had also received tuition from Clara and had toured Australia prior to his engagement in such concerts; fourth, an instrumental addition, Misses May and Gretta Davies, two violin players; and fifth, Clara's son Ivor Novello who had begun to establish himself in London as a composer of musical theatre and pieces for light entertainment. In particular, the concert was raising money for the YMCA hut in Barry (Plate 7.3) and also towards a maintenance fund for soldiers based on the frontlines.



**Plate 7.2:** Advertisement for YMCA concert, Dinas Powys (1915)<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> *Merthyr Pioneer*, 2 May 1914.

<sup>72</sup> *Barry Dock News*, 8 October 1915.



**Plate 7.3:** Clara Novello Davies Hut in 1915<sup>73</sup>

Although these concerts primarily involved solo singers, Clara's Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir was not forgotten. In April 1915, a week-long series of performances took place at Harrods in London, a lucrative department store that was also the appointed draper and furnisher of the Queen. Scheduled alongside a 'display of [the] season's fashions', the choir sang (accompanied by Ivor Novello) in order to raise funds for Queen Alexandra's Field Force Fund, a prestigious fund that had been established in October 1914, raising approximately £80,000 by the end of the War.<sup>74</sup> Here, the performance context is significant since Harrods was a store

<sup>73</sup> Image reproduced from Clara Novello Davies, p.212.

<sup>74</sup> *The Times*, 23 April 1915. It should be noted that Clara Novello Davies was not the only woman using music to aid the war efforts. For example, her friend Clara Butt (1872–1936), the English contralto, organised wartime concerts that not only contributed to funds for the soldiers but also helped musical artists who had suffered financially due to limited performance opportunities. While her husband Kennerley Rumford (1870–1957) served on the Western Front (in marked contrast to his usual profession as a baritone), Clara Butt raised £100,000 for the cause and was recognised as a Dame of the British Empire by King George V for her efforts.

catering largely to those who belonged to an elevated social class. In particular, fashion (especially during the War) was a concern only for the privileged. Moreover, adverts detailing the choir's performances ensured a connection between high-class fashion (with pictorial representations of contemporary garments) and what could be termed high-class music (due to the class of its members and the performance context).<sup>75</sup>

While the organisation of concerts was one way that Clara could help those affected by the War, there were other ways. Concerned about the dangers of living in Cardiff and London, Clara decided to move to New York during the war years. Although initially intended to be a short-term venture, Clara maintained her interests in vocal tuition by establishing a voice-training school located on the lucrative West End Avenue; she charged pupils \$200 a month to attend (unless 'worthy pupils had not the means').<sup>76</sup> Though removed from the war in terms of location, a letter written by the husband of one of her American pupils prompted Clara to become involved. Serving as a Colonel-in-Chief, he reported:

the courage of the men is marvelous [*sic*], but you have no idea what it is for the men to be without any variety, entertainment or music. One of the boys had a tin whistle, [...] but this poor little whistle eventually wore down [...]. The effect upon them is really devastating.<sup>77</sup>

Saddened yet inspired by the Colonel's letter, Clara initiated a campaign for musical instruments to be sent by members of the public to her studio. Since details of the campaign were disseminated in the *New York Times*, it was supported ardently and numerous instruments (including fiddles, mouth organs, whistles, drums, banjos and trumpets amongst others) were

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<sup>75</sup> For the adverts, see *The Times*, 23 April, 26 April and 28 April 1915.

<sup>76</sup> Novello Davies, p.213. In this matter, Clara described herself as "Robin Hood" [...] taking from the rich to give to the poor!'. Moreover, she stated: 'I never made "class distinctions" among those who entered my studios. In New York, I had a negro baritone who worked in the city's sewage system, though I did not know that until he presented himself one day for a lesson before going on "duty" in his high waterproof boots with a coat to match!'. Although the social standing of this pupil was revealed once lessons had been attended, she would have become aware of pupils lacking financial means for lessons before a series of lessons had taken place. Novello Davies, pp.251–52.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p.215.

collected and sent to the serving troops. Here, the effects of music on the soldiers were duly noted by Clara who maintained that ‘music [...] increases the efficiency of the men’.<sup>78</sup>

Although initially an American campaign, Clara also led a similar collection in the UK. After returning to London to visit Ivor who had been involved in a plane crash, she contacted the War Office to arrange an official Musical Instruments Collection. In a letter sent to the editor of *The Times* (published under the title ‘Music for Fighting Men’), Clara wrote persuasively about the project. She argued: ‘it should not be necessary for men “out there” to try to get music from “one-stringed fiddles made from cigar boxes [...]” Surely those households that have musical instruments which are not often used would be willing to send them to the troops’.<sup>79</sup> Although *The Times* was published in London, this was a national scheme with collection centres established in Cardiff, Bristol, Liverpool, Eastbourne and Hanwell (as well as in London). While similar appeals were made in local communities such as in Carmarthen (West Wales), knowledge about Clara’s significant efforts was also evident. For example, following an appeal for instruments printed in the *Carmarthen Journal and South Wales Weekly*, the newspaper urged its readers to ‘bear in mind that instruments [...] are urgently wanted in the trenches in spite of the large number which is being sent out weekly through the instrumentality of the fund organised by Madame Clara Novello Davies’.<sup>80</sup> Here, the success of the campaigns led by Clara on both sides of the Atlantic demonstrated that women were not always silent ‘angels in the house’.

## Conclusions

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p.218. Unsurprisingly, Clara was also an advocate of singing. In a letter written to the editor of *The Times* (dated 1 June 1918), she links the social benefits of music to singing in Wales. She states: ‘in Wales [...] music is easily the greatest force of all, and it is to the habit of singing in harmony that the Welsh owe that wonderful comradeship that the war has brought into such prominence. [...] I am hoping that after the war there will be a tremendous impulse toward song by the multitude, with a resultant improvement in both the moral and the physical life of the community’. See *The Times*, 3 June 1918. In addition, music began to be used for therapeutic purposes during World War I. See, for example, Alaine E. Reschke-Hernandez, ‘Paula Lind Ayers: “Song-Physician” for Troops with Shell Shock during World War I’, *Journal of Music Therapy*, 51/3 (2014), pp.276–291.

<sup>79</sup> *The Times*, 29 March 1918.

<sup>80</sup> *Carmarthen Journal and South Wales Weekly*, 7 June 1918.

In this chapter, I have examined further the social roles of Welsh women by addressing the pertinent issues of domestic responsibility, ideological behaviour and social aspiration. By examining journals that were published in Wales during the late nineteenth century, I showed how a bourgeois notion of domesticity (originating in England) was adapted by working-class women in Wales. On one hand, I argued that members of both Royal Welsh Ladies' Choirs represented bourgeois conceptions of social behaviour (since their participation in music reflected good morals and allowed them to act as role models). On the other hand, reviews of the choirs in the media informed members of the public that they were also involved in less than appropriate behaviour.

In this chapter, I also challenged stereotypes relating to labour and entrepreneurship. In terms of the former, I showed how the division of labour in coalmining was not always restricted to men; women were permitted to work on the pit brow, and there is evidence to suggest that some participated in singing while doing so; this might be termed a female equivalent to the Rhondda Glee Society, although there are not enough primary sources available to compare the two models further. In terms of the latter, I argued that the stereotype constructed by Patmore ('the angel in the house') was challenged by Clara especially in the war years of 1914 to 1918. Subverting the idea that women should be confined to the private sphere and be financially dependent upon men, I described how Clara headed fundraising efforts to raise money for men fighting in World War I. In summary, I argued that Beddow's claim regarding the invisibility of Welsh women in culture was not always correct. In the next chapter, I critique two further gendered stereotypes: first, Wales as 'the land of my mothers' (with reference to the suffrage movement); and second, Wales as 'the land of my fathers' (with reference to music, sport and nationhood).



## Chapter Eight

### Oral Histories, Written Narratives: The Myth of Wales

In popular mythology outside Wales, the view of the Welsh is of a friendly, inquisitive, religious, politically active people moving to the left rather than to the right, keen on education, sporting a *patois* [a language that is considered unconventional], who like singing and who are mad about rugby. A people whose sense of social class has been, on the whole distinctly different from that of the English. These are the cards of their identity.<sup>1</sup>

In 1983 as part of his discussion on the markers of identity in Wales, R. Brinley Richards, a historian as well as a key figure in the cultural development of Wales, noted that the key aspects of Welsh identity were: religion, politics, education, language, music and sport. The question of how identity is constructed in Wales has been the focus of much discussion for scholars from a range of disciplines since the 1980s. In this matter, studies such as Gwyn A. Williams' *When Was Wales?* (1985) and Dai Smith's *Wales! Wales?* (1984) served to highlight the ambiguity of how a native identity was constructed. Here, the notion of construction is significant since Williams in particular argued that a collective identity for the Welsh was manufactured by the people of Wales. He stated: 'Wales is a process. Wales is an artefact which the Welsh produce. The Welsh make and remake Wales day by day, year by year, generation after generation if they want to'.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he makes an important point that the truth behind the construction of national identity in Wales lies between what is considered to be real, yet what is actually an imagined history.

As Brinley Richards indicates above, the people of Wales are often associated with an inherent sense of musicality. Even Dylan Thomas fossilised this image of Wales in his seminal play 'Under Milk Wood' when the Reverend Eli Jenkins stated: 'Thank the Lord we are a musical nation'. But to what extent can this be considered to be true? Or to what extent is it a myth? While talking of her upbringing in Flint, North Wales, Caroline Bithell, an ethnomusicologist specialising in the effects of choral culture, reveals 'sometimes we sang in competitions but

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<sup>1</sup> R. Brinley Jones, 'Wales: A Case of Identity', *Comparative Education*, 19/2 (1983), p.159.

<sup>2</sup> Gwyn A. Williams, *When Was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (London: Black Raven, 1985), p.200.

mostly we sang because that's what you did if you were Welsh (even if, like me, you grew up in a part of Wales that was predominantly English-speaking').<sup>3</sup> More specifically, however, it is the male voice choir that has become a visible symbol used to represent Wales at cultural events and has contributed to Wales being considered, if not briefly, as the place where 'short dark men sing hymns in the shadow of slag heaps'.<sup>4</sup> While the link between the development of male singing and industrial output is real, the idea that female choirs did not exist alongside their male counterparts is seemingly a myth. Here, the tension between what constitutes myth and what depicts reality has concerned other scholars in ethnomusicology. In his study of style in Turkish music in the early Republican period, John O'Connell coins the term 'myth-ality' to acknowledge that an in-between space between the two is possible. For example, he notes that the life of his protagonist, Münir Nurettin Selçuk, is representative of 'myth-ality' since the vocalist 'constructed a personal narrative that was espoused by him [yet] written by others'.<sup>5</sup> A consideration of representation, here, marks an important addition to the polarised distinction between myth and reality.

In this chapter, I will first recall issues concerning Wales as the 'land of my mothers', particularly in relation to the relationship between women, music and politics. Second, I consider Wales as the 'land of my fathers' by examining how the rise of sport (especially rugby) contributed to the construction of a national identity that was based upon and reflected a masculine viewpoint. Here, a new tradition of singing the national anthem at rugby matches cemented the tie between masculinity and nationhood through music. Moreover, I argue that the internationalisation of rugby enabled the widespread promotion of this gendered association. Once again, I show how women have been largely marginalised from such a history. Although much of this thesis concerns the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I show how the

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<sup>3</sup> Caroline Bithell, *A Different Voice, A Different Song: Reclaiming Community through the Natural Voice and World Song* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p.3.

<sup>4</sup> R. Merfyn Jones, 'Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh', *Journal of British Studies*, 31/4 (1992), p.332. This statement was made by the Welsh Affairs Committee which declared in 1989 that Wales was problematic since it presented a 'fragmented image', and one fragment related to male singing (as quoted in the main text).

<sup>5</sup> O'Connell, *Alaturka: Style in Turkish Music (1923–1938)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), p.236.

same marginalisation of women remains true to some extent today. Utilising an ethnographic account concerning the music of Clara Novello Davies, I show how the female voice continues to be diminished in Wales, the 'land of song'.

### **Land of my Mothers: Music and Politics**

The relationship between music and politics has received some attention in this thesis. In particular, I traced the relationship between Hannah Hughes-Thomas, her involvement in political matters concerning the Welsh language and her choir which was established in a Cardiff coffee house which also functioned as a meeting place for linguistic activism. However, there is more to say here about political developments and music. As noted in Chapter 1, the suffrage movement was gaining impetus in the first decade of the twentieth century, precisely the time in which Madame Hughes-Thomas was developing an interest in musical endeavours. Up until this point, there has been little connection between her newly-formed female choir and the forms of political activism carried out by suffragettes. Was Hannah (and members of her choir) disinterested in campaigning for women's rights? If she was not actively involved, did she support the movement as a whole? How did suffrage affect the relationship with her politically-active husband, Cochfarf?

In an attempt to address such questions, I will return to my discussion of Lloyd George and the suffrage movement. While Lloyd George was openly dismissive of militant strategies employed by suffragettes (see early example of the 1912 National Eisteddfod in Wrexham, Chapter 1), his personal relationships were apparently affected by his political associations. In this matter, it is important to discuss once more his friendly connection with Edward Thomas ('Cochfarf') and Hannah Hughes-Thomas. While general sources regarding the specific relationship between music and suffrage in Wales are seemingly absent, connections between

Hannah Hughes-Thomas and the campaign have been unveiled. During an American tour of the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir in 1908, Hannah was asked specifically about her views on women's suffrage to which she replied:

Mrs [Emmeline] Pankhurst, the most noted of the suffragettes, is a dear friend of mine. The newspapers caricature her as a shrill, shrieking, hysterical sort of person, but it is a false picture. She is an educated, well-bred, intellectual English lady. Yes, a reformer, of course, and suffering the misrepresentation that all reformers must bear but there is no one more welcome at my home or whose friendship I value more.<sup>6</sup>

In describing her relationship with the suffrage campaign, it is interesting that Hannah should choose to associate herself openly with Mrs Pankhurst who had been arrested in connection with her militancy in June 1908 (for throwing stones into the Prime Minister's house at Downing Street) and in October 1908 (for publishing an inflammatory handbill, the WSPU's newspaper *Votes for Women* (1907–1912)) amongst others. Here, Hannah's use of the phrase 'most noted of the suffragettes' suggests that she was aware of the type of campaigning for which Emmeline was an advocate. That being said, it is clear that Hannah's interview response did not satisfy fully the American interviewer since she was further pushed: 'but do you believe in women's suffrage Madame Thomas?'. However, the response was somewhat surprising since it did not seem to reflect the usual passion associated with the campaign. Hannah replied, 'surely I do, [...] why not? They charge that women are inexperienced, but so were the men before the vote was extended to them'.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the apparent sense of apathy shown towards the issue by Hannah, it is possible that the 'Mrs Edward Thomas' who acted as part of a deputation from the Welsh Liberal Women's Federations and Associations which was meeting with Lloyd George, was indeed Madame Hughes-Thomas.<sup>8</sup> Here, the precedent of describing women using their husband's

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<sup>6</sup> *Weekly Mail*, 28 November 1908.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 15 July 1910. The other members of the deputation were Mrs D. A. Thomas (Sybil Haig Thomas (1857–1941), or Viscountess Rhondda, mother of Margaret Haig), Mrs Freeman, Mrs

names makes the task of uncovering the full membership of this particular group more difficult, as well as uncovering the membership of suffrage societies in general (as pointed out by Beddoe).<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, this example highlights the fact that Hannah may have been more actively involved in the campaign following the initial questions posed to her regarding suffrage. Moving from the sport of politics to the sport of the rugby field, the issues of music, gender and nationhood will now be discussed in relation to the rise of rugby in the early twentieth century, a development that occurred concurrently with the campaign for women's suffrage.

### **Land of My Fathers: Sport and Singing**

Rugby in Wales can be described as something of a national obsession. For match days held at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium, which is located in the centre of the city and has an ability to hold 74,500 supporters, the whole city is focussed not only upon the match itself but also upon promoting national identity. Several sources describe the Welsh capital city as a 'mecca' with thousands of fans lining the streets and the pubs, which are often the site of pre-match morning drinking as well as post-match celebrations and commiserations. The symbols of nationhood are also visually inscribed with Welsh flags draped from shops and buildings (as well as people), giant leeks being carried through the crowds and daffodil headdresses worn around the face. Make-shift stalls offering to paint the patriotic dragon on the cheeks of passing supporters are also commonplace during match days. Even for those with little to no interest in sport, such events are placed in their wider social consciousness in terms of media coverage through conventional methods such as television and radio, but also through newer modes of social media communication.

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Lester Jones, Mrs George Birt, Miss Vivian, Miss John and Mrs Harries (Women's Liberal Federation, Newport), Mrs D. M. Richards (Welsh National Council, Aberdare) and Miss Rudwell (Swansea Liberal Association).

<sup>9</sup> Beddoe (2004), p.5.

As a game, rugby was invented at Rugby School [founded in 1567] in Warwickshire where William Webb Ellis (1807–1872) performed an act of ‘inspired illegality’ by running with the ball in his arms at a match in 1823.<sup>10</sup> By the 1830s the action had become an accepted rule of play although clarifying references did not appear in a written form until 1845 when a group of the school’s prefects drew up an initial set of ‘rules’ for the game. It was another 26 years, however, until the rules of the game were fixed with the establishment of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) in 1871, a formation that was prompted by worries that the game was slipping into ‘unregulated modes of play’.<sup>11</sup> The desire to create a standardised set of game rules was also a recognition that the game was beginning to gain impetus outside of the site of its inception within a public school; it was conceived as a game for the social elite.

But why does rugby mean so much to the Welsh nation? Rugby arrived in Wales in the 1870s (the same decade as both successes for the South Wales Choral Union), approximately twenty years before regulated games of soccer (although unregulated forms of the game had been played in Wales for centuries). Like its beginnings in England, rugby in Wales was at first linked to the sports being played in ‘recently-formed colleges and revived grammar schools [located in] Lampeter, Llandovery, Cowbridge, Brecon and Monmouth’.<sup>12</sup> However, the development of the game and its popularity with the wider communities not engaged in education was due to two other factors as highlighted by the Welsh historian, Gareth Williams. Williams argues that the spread of the game was achieved through the support of a band of young professional men (such as solicitors and businessmen) who were not only educated but also belonged to an upwardly mobile social class; this is closely related to the game’s development in England.

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<sup>10</sup> Gareth Williams, *1905 and All That: Essays on Rugby Football, Sport and Welsh Society* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1991), p.8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.16.

By contrast, he argues that the second factor was specific to Wales: its mining industries. While the development of mining particularly in South Wales was not a new concept in the late nineteenth century, the decades following the 1870s marked the climax of industrial capitalism in Wales. Migration into the country for employment opportunities (as miners) was still prevalent. According to Williams, ‘nothing has more influenced the outlook and character of Welsh society [...] than this dependence on the primary production of coal’.<sup>13</sup> Against the social backdrop of an industrialised nation, rugby became a fundamental part of Welsh popular culture since it provided a vehicle for community building as well as being a democratic sport. Moreover, participants did not require economic means to succeed in rugby. While members of the middle classes viewed the popularity of rugby as ‘a metaphor for the wealth and confidence that industrial[s]ation had brought’ – or another way to ‘civilise’ the working classes – for those who belonged to the working classes, rugby symbolised much more than a leisure activity.<sup>14</sup>

Social class was key here. In Wales, rugby was a game for the working classes. It was a leisure sport for amateur players who were local men playing for acquiring status (not money) and cheered on by fellow members of their communities. From its origins in the late nineteenth century, rugby acted as a symbol of national pride and a banner under which diverse communities (that is, diverse in terms of native Welsh people and migrants from outside Wales) could unite. Moreover, it was not only social class that was significant but also nationality. Following the inaugural international match between Wales and England in 1881 (which was also the year that the Welsh Rugby Union was formed), rugby became a vehicle through which tensions could be fought outside of the implications of a political movement. In this manner, a Welsh defeat against the English was the ultimate allure not only due to social class (because rugby was considered a middle-class sport in England) but also because of the long-standing oppression that the Welsh people had been subjected to by the English (in terms of language and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Johnes, ‘A Prince, a King and a Referendum: Rugby, Politics, Nationhood in Wales, 1969–1979’, *Journal of British Studies*, 47/1 (2008), p.132. In fact, for some rugby could be viewed as an alternative form of religion.

politics amongst others). In his autobiography entitled *The Strength of the Hills*, George Ewart Evans (1909–1988), a Welsh-born schoolmaster and collector of oral history, critiques his own ‘obsession’ with rugby before noting: ‘to win at the game, especially against England, is as important as gaining victory in the long war Wales began fighting for its independence centuries ago’.<sup>15</sup>

Despite its success in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, Welsh rugby continues to be highly regarded within the consciousness of present-day communities in Wales as it has done throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. However, the strength of its grip on the nation is often linked to the period between 1969 and 1979 (also a time of fervent political activism throughout Britain), a ‘golden age’ in rugby when the Welsh national team won the Five Nations championship six times, while simultaneously winning three grand slams and six triple crowns. Here, the domination of the Welsh team seemed further to highlight the notion that sport, in particular rugby, could act as an ideal vehicle for the promotion of national identity. However, Wales was not the only nation to use sport for such purposes. To adapt what the sociologist Eric Hobsbawm has argued: ‘the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of [fifteen] named people’.<sup>16</sup> In fact, it has been highlighted elsewhere that sport in general is a cultural form well-equipped to showcase a sense of nationhood with its ‘emotions, national colo[u]rs, emblems, songs and contests’.<sup>17</sup> If sport is used as a symbol of national identity for many nations, why did rugby become so important to Wales? And, more importantly, why is it highlighted as a marker of nationhood for individuals as well as for Welsh people as a collective? As quoted earlier in this section, R. Brinley Jones describes people in Wales as those who like to sing and who are ‘mad about rugby’.<sup>18</sup> This was not an unusual

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<sup>15</sup> George Ewart Evans, *The Strength of the Hills: An Autobiography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1983), p.59.

<sup>16</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), p.143.

<sup>17</sup> Johnes, p.131.

<sup>18</sup> Jones (1983), p.159.



description. Tony Curtis, a Welsh-born poet and a Lecturer in English, recalls his early years as a boy growing up in rural West Wales:

there was a language divide [at grammar school]. I played for junior rugby XV but never got to know several members of the team who were from the Welsh [speaking] forms. [...] my parents moved to Pembrokeshire [from Carmarthen] after my third year and I heard virtually no Welsh in school or outside for the next fifteen years. [...] Still, our games master had dropped the winning goal at Lansdowne Road in an international back in the early 1950's and twice a year we visited the mecca of the Arms Parks [the precursor to the Millennium Stadium], roaring with the thousands and mouthing convincingly the general sense of [the national anthem entitled] 'Mae Hen Wladdd (*sic*) Fy Nhadau' ['The Old Land of My Fathers'].<sup>19</sup>

Following this, Curtis, a cultural insider, critiques his own position as a Welsh national by asking what it is to be Welsh. He asks: 'if nationality is not necessarily linked to language, if it is neither simply a matter of geographical residences, then is it a matter of rugby and singing?'.<sup>20</sup> Once again, sport and music are highlighted as the lynchpins upon which the markers of a native identity are placed.

Moreover, there is a link between the two since singing at rugby matches, particularly by Welsh supporters, has become a renowned practice over the last century. Among the most popular songs to be performed by the crowds before and during the match include: 'Calon Lân' ('Pure Heart'), 'Cwm Rhondda' (literally 'Rhondda Valley' but more popularly known in English as 'Bread of Heaven'), 'Hymns and Arias' by the Welsh entertainer Max Boyce (b.1943) and the national anthem. Both 'Calon Lân' and 'Cwm Rhondda' are linked to an earlier period in Welsh history. The first was created in the nineteenth century from a text written by Daniel James (1848–1920) and a tune composed by John Hughes (1872–1914). However, the second song ('Cwm Rhondda') has a more complicated history; its text was written by the aforementioned prolific Welsh hymn writer, William Williams Pantycelyn in the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> That being

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<sup>19</sup> Tony Curtis, 'Introduction', in Tony Curtis (ed.), *Wales: The Imagined Nation* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986), p.8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> E. Wyn James, 'The Evolution of the Welsh Hymn', in Isabel Rivers and David L. Wykes (eds), *Dissenting Praise: Religious Dissent and the Hymn in England and Wales* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), p.244.

said, its tune was not composed until the early twentieth century when a different John Hughes (1873–1932) penned it in 1907. Moreover, the singing of each of these hymns on the modern-day rugby pitch serves not only to articulate a sense of national identity but one that is linked to the older cultural forms of religious practices (especially nonconformity) and the Welsh language (although ‘Cwm Rhondda’ is also sung in English), despite its performers not necessarily being religious or, in fact, Welsh speakers.

Language is an important factor to consider here. Since the majority of the population of Wales is not Welsh-speaking, singing in Welsh at rugby matches symbolises a form of native identity that is not always expressed in the daily lives of the performers. Referring to the golden age of the 1970s, Trevor Fishlock, an author and a broadcaster, remarks that ‘many of [the rugby supporters] do not know the meaning of the Welsh words of the anthem that they learned parrot-fashion at school or chapel or grandfather’s knee’.<sup>22</sup> The fact that many rugby fans may not be wholly familiar with Welsh pronunciation or the meaning of song texts was recognised more recently by BBC Wales, a media organisation that has historically used rugby broadcasting as an ‘instrument of nation building’.<sup>23</sup> In 2014, the annual run-up to the Six Nations rugby championship included a campaign launched by BBC Wales to teach the words and tune of ‘Calon Lân’ to the nation; the campaign was fronted by Wynne Evans (b.1972), a professional Welsh tenor, television personality and presenter for BBC Radio Wales. In addition to adverts played on television and radio highlighting the organisation’s mission, step-by-step (or line-by-line) videos appeared online entitled ‘could you learn to sing Calon Lân in 30 minutes?’.<sup>24</sup> Yet, by singing the Welsh words from memory, rugby supporters (particularly those who are Anglophone) use language and song both to affirm to themselves and to promote to others a sense of nationhood. Moreover, this is a collective Welsh identity.

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<sup>22</sup> Trevor Fishlock, *Wales and the Welsh* (London: Cassell, 1992), p.7.

<sup>23</sup> John Davies, *Broadcasting and the BBC in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), p.319.

<sup>24</sup> BBC iWonder, ‘Could you Learn to Sing Calon Lân in 30 minutes?’, BBC website <[www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z9f8tfr](http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z9f8tfr)> [accessed 15 April 2015].

Singing at rugby matches in Wales, however, has not always been received positively, and, in this respect, arguments have emerged surrounding the performance of national anthems and their association with concepts of national identity. The Welsh national anthem ‘Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau’ (‘The Old Land of my Fathers’) was written by Evan James (1809–1878) and his son James (1833–1902), both of whom worked as trades people in Pontypridd, in 1856; the year appears on the earliest known copy held at the National Library of Wales, though it is unclear if the text (written by Evan) or the music (written by James) was composed first. Despite not being commissioned as a national anthem or for a particular event, the piece gained attention in the locality when a young girl from Pontypridd named Elizabeth John sang ‘Glan Rhondda’ (as it was first known) at the vestry of the Tabor Methodist Chapel in Maesteg in 1856.



**Plate 8.1:** Statue of Evan and James James in Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Photograph by Rachelle Barlow.

Following this, the song became a popular favourite to be sung at national *eisteddfodau* and, in 1860, John Owen who had been an adjudicator at the 1858 Llangollen Eisteddfod, sought permission to include the song in his collection named *Gems of Welsh Melody*; it was within this collection that the song was re-titled ‘Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau’ which is also the first line of the text. Seventy years later, a campaign initiated by the Pontypridd Cymmrodorion Society resulted in a statue being designed by Sir Goscombe John to honour the lives of Evan and James James which was unveiled at Ynysangharad Park in Pontypridd on 23 July 1930.<sup>26</sup> Once again, musical achievements in South Wales were celebrated in the form of commemorative figures; the unveiling of this statue marked ten years since Sir John had completed the Caradog memorial in Aberdare. In terms of national identity, however, the memorial for the father and son, which features two bronze figures representing music and poetry, was noteworthy since the inscription acknowledges that their song was considered to be the national anthem (Plate 8.1). It reads: ‘In memory of Evan James and James James, father and son, of Pontypridd, who, inspired by a deep and tender love of their native land united poetry to song and gave Wales her National Anthem, Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau’.

However, it was prior to this occasion that the relationship between the national anthem and sport became established. On 16 December 1905, the Welsh national rugby team took on the ‘Originals’, the national rugby team of New Zealand that had gained a stellar reputation in terms of its successes, at the Arms Park in Cardiff. The cultural significance of the match between the two teams cannot be understated; in fact, according to Gareth Williams, ‘this one rugby game merits as much “thick description” as any Balinese cockfight’.<sup>27</sup> In a game with a

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<sup>26</sup> *Cardiff Times*, 19 June 1909.

<sup>27</sup> Williams (1991), p.70. Here, Williams is referring to a seminal study on Balinese cockfighting by Clifford Geertz, an American anthropologist. More accurately, Geertz (and scholars such as James Clifford and George Marcus) was an interpretative anthropologist. Heavily influenced by the practices of hermeneutic philosophers (such as Ricoeur), he sought meaning from culture by viewing shared cultural practices as a ‘text’ that could be read through interpretation. This approach was formed through a critique of objective ‘truth’ statements that were advocated by scholars in the academy. Instead, exponents of interpretative anthropology suggest that reality cannot be objectified. In this manner, ethnographic work is based upon ‘inherently *partial* [truths]’ since ethnographers can only provide subjective interpretations. In particular, Geertz advocated a method of ‘thick description’ in which scholars would

final score of 3–0 to Wales, Williams’ remark would appear to be overstated. However, the match between the two nations has been hotly debated throughout the twentieth century since a try scored by the New Zealand player Bob Deans was controversially disallowed, an action which not only cost the New Zealand the match but also its first international defeat; prior to the Cardiff match of 1905, the New Zealand team had won all 27 fixtures, scoring 801 points and conceding only three tries.<sup>28</sup>

That being said, the match between Wales and New Zealand reflected more than an opportunity to boost such statistics; it was socially significant. At the turn of the twentieth century, there were a number of similarities between the two countries; each had a population of approximately two to three million at the time and each was forming societies in a similar way. In this matter, Professor Dai Smith importantly states that rugby was an important factor in the formation of communities since the sport was able to be utilised as a way of expressing national identity and a sense of equality.<sup>29</sup> The players, in this case, represented what could be considered the best of the nation, and for the supporters (and subsequently, backers of their own nationhood), a winning score not only represented a sporting victory but a national victory. Highlighting the political position of New Zealand, Smith also acknowledges the notion that the 1905 match represented the journey of a nation under British colonial rule to ‘the heart of the Empire’.<sup>30</sup>

While the sport itself was seen as a symbol of national identity, the performance of nationhood began before the starting whistle was blown. It was prior to the 1905 match that the ‘Originals’ performed a Haka – a ceremonial Māori chant and dance often associated with war – for the first time in Britain prior to a rugby match. In particular, the Haka performed before the

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present highly detailed yet personal ethnographies to uncover cultural meaning. For more information on Geertz and his approach, see Geertz, ‘Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture’, in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp.3–33. See also James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>28</sup> *The Times*, 1 November 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

Welsh team was called ‘Ka mate, ka mate’ (English, ‘It is death, it is death’) and was composed by Ngati Toa Chieftain Te Rauparaha, the leader of the Ngāti tribe of New Zealand’s North Island, c.1820.<sup>31</sup> The Welsh fans of the 47,000-strong crowd responded by singing en masse the national anthem ‘Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau’, a tradition that was inaugurated at this match yet one that has become customary before international matches involving the Welsh national rugby team. Commenting upon the mass singing of the Welsh team and their supporters, Dave Gallaher (1873–1917), the Irish-born captain of the New Zealand ‘Originals’ team, reportedly said: ‘it was the most impressive incident I have ever witnessed on a football field. It gave a semi-religious solemnity to this memorable contest [...] long after the incidents of play have grown dim and blurred in one’s memory, the impression that will linger still vividly will be that vast chorus sounding forth the death-knell of the All Blacks’.<sup>32</sup>

However, the practice of singing the national anthem at rugby matches in Wales did not become a habitual part of pre-match ceremonials until the last quarter of the twentieth century. It has been noted that the Welsh national anthem was included as a ‘polite’ gesture at the Wales vs. England match on 20 January 1968 as part of the Five Nations Championship.<sup>33</sup> At the same match, it was reported: ‘Welshmen sang “Sospan Fach”’ (English, ‘Little Saucepan’; a Welsh folksong) after a recovery pickup by the famed Welsh player Gareth Edwards (b. 1947); this observation suggested that singing by the Welsh fans continued long after the play had commenced.<sup>34</sup> In addition to the Welsh national anthem, however, ‘God Save the Queen’, the national anthem for England as well as for Britain, was also played. As Johnes points out, its inclusion ‘could at least be justified at matches in Cardiff against England and even Scotland,

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<sup>31</sup> All Blacks website <<http://www.allblacks.com/Teams/Haka>> [accessed 1 April 2015]. Following the 1905 UK tour of the New Zealand ‘Originals’, the team was nicknamed the ‘All Blacks’ by a *Daily Mail* reporter, a name that has since been adopted by the team.

<sup>32</sup> *The Times*, 1 November 2005.

<sup>33</sup> Johnes, p.142.

<sup>34</sup> *The Times*, 22 January 1968.

since it was the visitors' requested anthem, but its inclusion at clashes [for Wales] against France was less explicable'.<sup>35</sup>

At such instances, the British anthem was typically received unfavourably by Welsh fans who booed throughout its playing. In March 1974, letters relating to the issue of national anthems at rugby matches were published in *The Times* following the decision of the Rugby Football Union (an English organisation) to disallow the Welsh anthem to be played at Twickenham. Here, a letter from a Mr James Griffiths put forth what he believed to be the reason for Wales's defeat to England: the omission of the Welsh anthem. Mr Griffiths, an older Welsh gentleman (his earliest memory of an international rugby match was in 1906) and a resident of Combemartin Road in Wandsworth, London, argued that without the 'inspiration' and '*hnyl*' of the fans' singing, the Welsh team suffered in terms of points scored. However, he believed that the anthem was prohibited due to insensitivity (rather than malice) on the part of the RFU. Yet he urged the RFU to reconsider before its absence led 'to the breakup of the United Kingdom'.<sup>36</sup> In response to Griffiths' letter, a Mr M A Holmyard from Surrey succinctly stated that 'the English' would more readily support the playing of the Welsh national anthem if their own anthem, 'God Save the Queen' was not 'so regularly interrupted by whistles and catcalls' at matches played in Cardiff.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the Welsh Rugby Union lodged an 'official complaint' and proposed to eliminate 'God Save the Queen' from future matches played by England in Wales. Such a proposal was enough to make the English RFU reconsider its acceptance of the Welsh national anthem.

But why was the singing of national anthems causing such reactions? The answer is indelibly linked to the performance of national identity.<sup>38</sup> Even in the early 1970s (before the

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<sup>35</sup> Johnes, p.142.

<sup>36</sup> *The Times*, 19 March 1974.

<sup>37</sup> *The Times*, 21 March 1974.

<sup>38</sup> National anthems have become the subject of ethnomusicological endeavour in recent years. Bohlman, for instance, has examined the use of the anthem for nation building in European contexts. Here, he makes the distinction between official and unofficial national anthems (as mentioned in Chapter 1). See, Philip V. Bohlman,

emergence of the dispute highlighted above), it was noted pre-emptively in the press that the Welsh crowds at the match between Wales and New Zealand to be played in Cardiff in December 1972, would 'be prepared as usual to pour out an ocean of sound in which to engulf the opposition'.<sup>39</sup> The symbolism of the singing in this 'saga of conflict between two, small proud nations' was not unnoticed by the article's author, David Parry-Jones, a celebrated Welsh sports commentator and writer. He explained: 'the noise itself beginning with *Sospan Fach* and the National Anthem is symbolic of the Welsh desire to be noticed and heard. For by definition the Celtic fringe has always been denied a central place in the pattern of a Britain dominated by Angles, Saxons and Jutes'.<sup>40</sup> In this manner, the Welsh rugby team represented visually 'the best manhood of the race' and its supporters provided an aural commentary on the political position of Wales through song.<sup>41</sup>

Sport, here, was utilised as a means through which the people of Wales could unite but also, more importantly, rugby in particular acted as a vehicle for the expression of a nationalist struggle for independence. Invoking further the notion of anthems as signifiers of both a national and a political identity, it is unsurprising that the inclusion of the British national anthem, 'God Save the Queen' was received unfavourably particularly in matches that did not feature England. In this respect, the inclusion of the anthem served to highlight the subordinate position of Wales within the larger framework of the United Kingdom. However, Johnes has importantly noted that while sport could be used in Wales to promote a sense of political nationalism (and thus a rebellion against an English hegemony), such 'ardent patriotism' was not reflected in the 1979

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*Focus: Music, Nationalism, and the Making of the New Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (New York; London: Routledge, 2011). Another study on national anthems has been made by J. Martin Daughtry who importantly states that a national anthem should not be regarded as 'the static reflection of a monolithic ideology but rather as a polysemous text through which national identity is constantly being negotiated'. In particular, his discussion is concerned with the publically-stated opposing views on a decision made by the Russian Federation and its President Vladimir Putin to reinstate, in 2000, a former Soviet anthem in post-Soviet Russia. For further details, see J. Martin Daughtry, 'Russia's New Anthem and the Negotiation of National Identity', *Ethnomusicology*, 47/1 (2003), pp.42–67.

<sup>39</sup> *The Times*, 2 December 1972.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *South Wales Daily News*, 18 December 1905.



referendum for devolution since almost 80 per cent of voters voted against the campaign for independence.<sup>42</sup>

David Andrews, a sports sociologist and a sports historian, further highlights this notion by stating that while rugby in Wales was utilised as a means of expressing an emerging sense of nationhood, it also allowed the people of Wales to demonstrate a loyalty to British sovereignty not least because rugby was initiated as an English sport. In this matter, he provides a number of examples to explain: first, following the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, the Welsh Rugby Union closed rugby pitches throughout Wales for a period of two weeks as a ‘mark of respect’ and a ‘demonstrative expression of Welsh allegiance to British sovereignty’.<sup>43</sup> Second, the adoption of the Prince of Wales’ feathers – a badge comprising three white feathers, a coronet and a banner with the motto ‘Ich Dien’ (English, ‘I serve’) – upon the players’ jerseys and its use as the official logo for the Welsh Rugby Union, ‘demonstrate[s] emphatically [a] loyalty to and place within the British imperial state formation’.<sup>44</sup> And, third, contemporary accounts from the press reinforced the idea that the Welsh national rugby team were part of the larger British Empire; commenting upon the victory of Wales over New Zealand in 1905, the *Western Mail* stated on 18 December 1905 that Wales had ‘c[o]me to the rescue of the Empire’.<sup>45</sup> Here, rugby allowed Wales to reflect both a national and an imperial identity.

However, there is more to say about the type of identity that rugby was helping the people of Wales to promote; that is, rugby perpetuated (and celebrated) the construction of a gendered (masculine) nation. While it cannot be denied that rugby was a male sport – it was played exclusively by men in late Victorian and Edwardian eras – the media attention

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<sup>42</sup> Johnes, p.131. According to a report published by the House of Commons Library, 79.7 per cent of voters voted against devolution in the 1979 Referendum. See Richard Dewdney, ‘Results of Devolution Referendums (1979 & 1997)’ <[www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)> [accessed 2 April 2015].

<sup>43</sup> David Andrews, ‘Sport and the Masculine Hegemony of the Modern Nation: Welsh Rugby, Culture and Society’, in John Nauright and Timothy J. L. Chandler (eds), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity* (London; Portland: Frank Cass, 1996), p.63.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp.64–65.

surrounding its performance highlighted various traits associated with masculinity. For example, not only did the *South Wales Daily News* describe the Welsh team of 1905 as ‘the best manhood of the race’ but it also traced the characteristics displayed in rugby to the Celtic ancestors of Wales.

It stated:

The great quality of defence and attack in the Welsh race is to be traced to the training of the early period when powerful enemies drove them to the mountain fortresses. There was developed then those traits of character that find fruition [in rugby] today. ‘Gallant little Wales’ has produced sons strong of determination, invincible stamina, resolute, mentally keen, physically sound.<sup>46</sup>

However, such observations and associations with masculinity were not limited to rugby played at the turn of the twentieth century. In fact, the aforementioned article by David Parry-Jones in *The Times* was entitled ‘Fifteen Welshmen Go to War’, a title that reminded the newspaper’s readership that the match was not merely a game of sport but rather an opportunity to fight for national pride.<sup>47</sup> By invoking the imaginary of war, in particular, the relationship between sport and masculinity, and music and masculinity becomes apparent. As discussed in Chapter 4, choral singing in Wales (especially by men) was linked with the pursuits of war not only in terms of repertoire (with titles such as ‘The Destruction of Gaza’ and ‘The March of the Men of Harlech’) but also in terms of how choral competitions were viewed as events in which choristers could fight for both local and national pride.

In fact, there are more connections between rugby and male choral singing. Rugby, and sporting teams in general, provides local communities with a focus, something through which communities can promote a form of local identity. Moreover, it is not insignificant that the development and, more importantly, popularity of rugby in Wales coincided with the pinnacle of

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<sup>46</sup> *South Wales Daily News*, 18 December 1905.

<sup>47</sup> *The Times*, 2 December 1972. The symbolism of sport and war has been utilised at other opportunities. In his book entitled *The Lion and the Unicorn* (1941), George Orwell, the dystopian novelist, wrote ‘probably the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, but the opening battles of all subsequent wars have been lost there’. Here, Orwell is referencing a popular vignette associated with a visit to Eton by the Duke of Wellington (1769–1852) in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup> It should be noted, however, that historians have since argued that the oft-quoted phrase (‘the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton’) was not phrased in such a way. See ‘Duke of Wellington’, *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, ed. by Elizabeth Knowles (Oxford: OUP, 2009). Accessed online via: <<http://www.oxfordreference.com>> [accessed 15 May 2015].

the industrial expansion. In this context, rugby played an important social function in terms of bonding for working-class men who, as Gareth Williams points out, are largely conditioned towards ‘autonomous individualism’ in their industrial form of labour.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, participation in rugby for these men helped them to ‘block-buil[d] identity upwards from the level of works, club and street teams’ while simultaneously galvanising the local communities around them.<sup>49</sup> Williams explains further:

[Rugby] met significant needs. It provided dramatic excitement and aesthetic satisfaction. In its appeal to a sense of shared ritual it fulfilled a valuable bonding function; it flourished both as a relief from and an analogue to the work experience, complementing as much as compensating for the sinking of the individual in the collective.<sup>50</sup>

However, it is certainly possible to substitute the word ‘rugby’ above for Welsh choral singing; here, sport and music are synonymous with the notion of *communitas* and the promotion of a collective identity.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the lure of both for an industrialised population was seemingly linked to the desire to participate in a leisure activity that not only afforded opportunities for individuals to express themselves through participation but also for local communities to unite through the ‘theatricality’ offered by both sport and music.

### Land of Song: Myth or Reality?

In a monthly publication which promoted itself as a ‘journal of national social progress’, Wales was unequivocally declared a ‘land of song’ in November 1918, the same month in which the end of the First World War was declared. Here, the author of the article, L. J. Roberts, boldly stated that the claim ‘Wales, all [of] Wales, is a sea of song (‘Môr o gân yw Cymru i gyd’) [was] not

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<sup>48</sup> Gareth Williams (1991), p.74.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> The term *communitas*, relating to a sense of community with added emphases on intersubjectivity and social bonding, was theorised by Victor Turner (1969). In recent years, scholars from anthropology and ethnomusicology have drawn upon the term to explain ritual elements of performance and markers of identity. See, for example, Carol Trosset, ‘Welsh Communitas as Ideological Practice’, *Ethos*, 16/2 (1988), pp.167–180 and Bithell (2014).

an empty boast. It [was] a plain inconvertible fact [...]. The gift of song in Wales [was] an inherited tendency: it [was] a native and resident faculty'.<sup>52</sup> Invoking, as many writers and historians have, the musical encounters of Giraldus Cambrensis in particular and the established tradition of *eisteddfodau* in general to provide evidence for such a claim, Roberts suggests that the musical legacy of Wales was one that had been established over many centuries. Moreover, it was a legacy linked specifically to the singing voice. But how true was this? Did the rapid industrialisation of the nineteenth century and its associated demographic explosion not influence at all the trajectory of this musical view of Wales?

For the Welsh historian Prys Morgan, it certainly did. In a quest to trace the Welsh past in the Romantic period, Morgan controversially argues that a number of key markers of collective Welsh identity were, in fact, traditions that were constructed or even invented. Among the subjects discussed were the cultural symbols used to represent Wales (notably the dragon, the leek and the daffodil). On this matter, he noted that the well-known Welsh dragon that is featured on the national flag 'only replaced the three plumes in Welsh esteem in the twentieth century' when the plumes and its subservient motto were not considered to be appropriate for 'radicals, liberals and socialists'.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, he points out that while the leek was used as a badge of national identity for centuries before the Romantic era (since its green and white colours were associated with Welsh princes), it was also worn in England. However, the daffodil did not become a national symbol until 1907 when the Welsh words for leek and daffodil were seemingly misunderstood (leek is *cenbinnen* in Welsh, whereas *cenbinnen Bedr* is daffodil). Lloyd George favoured the daffodil over the leek though and thus it became the insignia for much of the Government's executive publications during the period. It was at the cultural event of the *eisteddfod* (held either as a local or a national event) that such symbols came to the fore in the late

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<sup>52</sup> L. J. Roberts, 'Wales: A Land of Song', *Welsh Outlook: A Monthly Journal of National Social Progress*, 5/11 (1918), p.337.

<sup>53</sup> Prys Morgan, 'From a Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.90.

Victorian and Edwardian eras. Here, their utilisation is of significance in terms of both nationhood and identity since they ‘served to help Welshmen [and women] visualize their own country [... by acting as] a substitute for the lost customs and rites of the old society’.<sup>54</sup>

While the *eisteddfod* provided also a context for musical performance and competition, it is Morgan’s discussion of Wales as the ‘land of song’ that is most intriguing with reference to the subject matter of this thesis. In particular, he questioned how the people of Wales became renowned in terms of their innate musical ability since the same nation had been perplexed by Robert ap Huw’s harp manuscript in the seventeenth century, and had falsified (to some extent) a musical past in the eighteenth century (by adapting the titles of English tune names to make them seem as if they were of Welsh origin). How did Wales become a nation in which the ‘sound of music had rung out from the harps and throats of the people for centuries [where] song books, choirs, consorts of Welsh harps, prizes and medals for music’ were considered to be customary?<sup>55</sup>

Despite highlighting an important issue, however, Morgan’s discussion of how Wales became known as a singing nation in the nineteenth century is somewhat overshadowed by the origins of instrumental music in Wales. In particular, he discusses the triple harp, an instrument often perceived to be of ancient Welsh origin. In this matter, the treatises published by Edward Jones as well as the financial patronage of Lady Llanover amongst others ensured a native conception of the instrument despite it being used also in Italy during the Baroque period. In terms of an inherent musical ability, Morgan argues that the success of male harpists such as Edward Jones and blind John Parry (c.1710–1782) not only inspired a sense of self-confidence in the Welsh but also perpetuated the ‘myth of the great antiquity of Welsh native music’.<sup>56</sup> With a burgeoning sense of musical confidence and a (perhaps exaggerated) lineage of musical practices,

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.92.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.74.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.79.

the emergence of the National Eisteddfod in 1861 led to an ‘outburst of [musical] activity and [a] sense of national pride involved in it’.<sup>57</sup>

However, it is surprising that Morgan, in his representation of Wales as the ‘land of song’, fails to mention Caradog and the victories of the South Wales Choral Union at the inaugural National Music Meeting in 1872 and, subsequently, in 1873. Yet, according to the press, the two issues were related. Self-confidence in the ability of the nation’s singers was evident in the period leading up to the first competition; for example, the *Merthyr Telegraph* stated: ‘When the period for the grand competition arrives no Welshman need fear that the united choirs from these mountains will fail to sustain their world-wide reputation as a musical people’.<sup>58</sup> On a similar level, the *Aberdare Times* reported: ‘in a letter asking for financial assistance, the secretaries D. Brythonfryn Griffiths and David Rosser state that success would give the ancient saying “môr o gân yw Cymru gyd” additional and irrefutable confirmation’.<sup>59</sup> It is important to note that both statements not only acknowledged the wider ideology of Wales as a ‘land of song’ but significantly that a victory for the great massed choir would help to perpetuate such a vision; both were published prior to the London contest.

The victories for Caradog’s choir were thus not only significant in terms of contemporary achievements but also because they cemented for Wales an identity that was based foremost upon the practice of singing. The fact that this singing was collective was also important; it was Christian in character and served to galvanise community spirit at a time of intensive industrial expansion. However, an emerging sense of national consciousness in Wales – a consciousness that could be expressed musically – did much to heighten the significance of the competition. By the time of the inaugural National Music Meeting, the Welsh national anthem had been performed in local and national contexts for 16 years. The relationship between music

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> *Merthyr Telegraph, and General Advertiser for the Iron Districts of South Wales*, 3 May 1872.

<sup>59</sup> *Aberdare Times*, 8 June 1872.

and nationhood was, in fact, developed following the second contest when Henry Brinley Richards (1817–1885), a native of Carmarthen who had completed his musical training in London at the Royal Academy of Music and in Paris under the tutelage of Chopin, published the aforementioned collection, *The Songs of Wales*, in 1873.<sup>60</sup>

This collection of seventy songs represented the republication of songs that had appeared in previous volumes, such as Maria Jane Williams' *Ancient National Airs of Gwent and Morgannwg* (1844) and the collections of John Parry ('Bardd Alaw', 1776–1851; distinct from blind John Parry); the contribution of Brinley Richards was the presentation of familiar airs in new arrangements with piano accompaniments that were decorative yet simple enough to be played by amateurs. In fact, the popularity of the collection is evident as the book was 'said to be on the piano in every music-loving miner's cottage'.<sup>61</sup> *The Songs of Wales* was an important publication in terms of music and nationhood since not only did it further promote the transition from harp-based accompaniment to piano-based accompaniment, but it also ensured that the newly-invigorated national interest in song could be practised in the home setting; the musical identity associated with the idea of the 'land of song' could therefore be transferred from the public to the private sphere.

Although the occurrence of reunions organised for members of the South Wales Choral Union was discussed in Chapter 3, there is more to say about how reunions related to the broader issue of national identity. If the victories of the massed choir served to confirm an iconic reading of nationhood as suggested here, then the reconstruction of the choir served to reinforce such a vision in the twentieth century. As John Gillis importantly states: 'national identities are, like everything historical, constructed and reconstructed'.<sup>62</sup> That being said, the reunions brought about one significant difference, namely the relationship between music and language. As stated

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<sup>60</sup> I am grateful to Professor Trevor Herbert for bringing to my attention the timely publication of this musical collection in relation to the success of Caradog's choir.

<sup>61</sup> Phyllis Kinney, *Welsh Traditional Music* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p.193.

<sup>62</sup> John R. Gillis, 'Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship', in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.4.

earlier, the test pieces required to be learned for the competition belonged to the Western art music tradition (and thus reflected the musical tastes of the British metropolis) and were sung in English. While the original repertoire was repeated at the choir's first reunion (held in Margam in July 1914), however, additional pieces were included to reflect a link to Wales.

In this matter, the organist, D. J. Thomas, began the musical proceedings with renditions of Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus' and Joseph Parry's 'Aberystwyth'. According to a contemporary account, however, the latter was played for a second time during which the singers who were present in the abbey, joined in for a seemingly unplanned recital of this well-known hymn. It was noted that 'the incident was really thrilling in its effectiveness. It was as if the choristers of 41 years ago had actually heard the Lost Chord again'.<sup>63</sup> The idea of linking the choir's reunion with a sense of national identity was further reinforced sonically with a harpist's performance of several Welsh airs as well as a solo rendition of the national anthem by Madame Williams-Penn and a massed performance of the renowned 'March of the Men of Harlech' by the choir; incidentally, the latter piece was presented as an encore alongside 'God Bless the Prince of Wales' following the victories of the choir at the National Music Meetings. By including the performances of native pieces, the reunion served not only as an opportunity for members of the choir to reflect upon their involvement in Caradog's choir but, more importantly, to ensure that the events were tied closely to a form of national identity and to re-affirm that Wales was indeed a 'land of song'.

### **Land of Men's Song? Nation and the Gendered Voice**

In turning the spotlight upon the celebration and remembrance of Welsh singing in the early twentieth century, it should be highlighted that the presentation of the collective practice was not confined to men alone. However, in the late twentieth century and to some extent in the twenty

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<sup>63</sup> *Herald of Wales*, 9 August 1914.



first century, the participation of women in Welsh choral singing is often significantly marginalised or, in some instances, completely absent. According to *The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales* (published in 2008), ‘the male choir is widely regarded as a characteristically Welsh institution. It found congenial soil in the country’s populous mining valleys, metallurgical centres and quarrying districts [... and] fulfilled similar roles to football teams in providing a focus for local identity and opportunities for disciplined collective expression’.<sup>64</sup> While it cannot be denied that the practice of choral singing in Wales developed along gendered lines as this thesis has traced, the tradition was at first mixed and inclusive as was shown in both sacred and secular contexts (for example, in chapel choirs and in *eisteddfod* competitions). Nevertheless, sources (such as the one mentioned above) fail to acknowledge the development of female choirs alongside their male counterparts, perpetuating the myth that choral singing in Wales has been historically linked only to men.

While the relationship between music, particularly choral singing, and masculinity in Wales was developed through a historical past, the re-telling of such a past in the present day is often done without questioning. That is, without considering the accuracy of an imagined past which continues to be promoted but also the broader implications that arise from denying the role of women in the history of Welsh music. In this matter, the words of John Haydn Davies (1905–1991), conductor of the Treorchy Male Choir from 1946 to 1969, serve to highlight this point. Acknowledging that ‘the male choir has a distinctive social quality’, he boldly claims (albeit falsely) that: ‘it is the one organi[s]ation in the modern world that has most successfully resisted the encroachment of women’.<sup>65</sup> Davies presumptuously adds that ‘many of its members will not

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<sup>64</sup> *The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales*, ed. by John Davies, Nigel Jenkins, Menna Baines and Peredur I. Lynch (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), p.532.

<sup>65</sup> John Haydn Davies, ‘The Contemporary Composer and the Male Choir’, *Welsh Music/Cerddoriaeth Cymru*, 1/8 (1961), p.9.

join a mixed choir but like to get away from their women for a few hours each week to enjoy the company of “the boys” and to forget domestic cares in song’.<sup>66</sup>

Despite highlighting the pertinent issues of (male) sociability and escapism related to collective music making, Davies fails to mention that women featured in the development of the nation’s choral practice and even suggests that a collaboration between the sexes would not be welcomed by the members of Welsh male choirs; here, the use of the words ‘most successfully resisted’ are particularly telling. It is important to note that Davies was a prominent figure in Welsh music throughout the twentieth century. With experience in male singing (gained from leading the Blaenselsig Male Voice Choir in 1933) and in mixed singing (gained from leading the Blaencwm Choral Society from 1935 to 1947), Davies was asked if he would consider becoming the conductor for the Treorchy Male Choir if it was revived following the conclusion of the Second World War. Surely enough, in September 1946, a scratch notice that was placed on the cinema screen at the Parc and Dare Theatre, together with notices placed in shop windows and the power of word-of-mouth, ensured enough interest in the choir’s revival (it was disbanded in 1943). Davies, who had previously acted as Assistant Conductor (from 1938), accepted the invitation to conduct the newly-reformed ensemble and it was under his guidance that the choir gained both a national and an international reputation; it won 22 out of 27 competitions entered under his directorship (including eight successes at the National Eisteddfod), organised its first international tour to Switzerland in 1963 and was the first Welsh choir to perform before Queen Elizabeth II as part of the St Cecilia Concert held at the Royal Albert Hall in 1966.

To highlight further the representation of women (or lack thereof) in the musical history of Wales, it is interesting to assess a contemporary event held in Cardiff in December 2014 to celebrate the life of Clara Novello Davies. Authored by the Cardiff-based writer, Arnold Evans, *Novello & Son* depicts the life of Madame Clara, focussing particularly on her musical

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

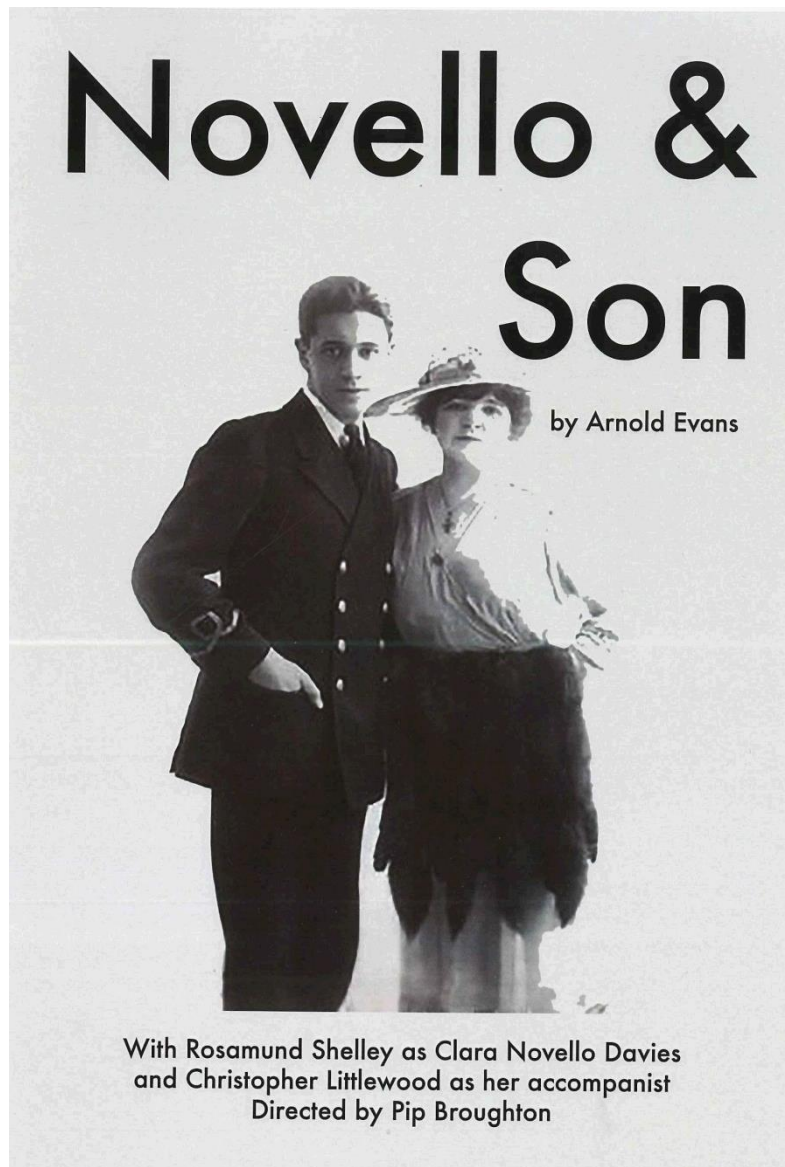
achievements and the (sometimes strained) relationship with her son, Ivor Novello. Although the factual framework of this musical revue is taken largely first hand from Clara (utilising her autobiography in particular), Evans admits that his depiction of her life may not have been entirely accepted by Clara herself.<sup>67</sup> He says: 'I don't know if *Novello & Son* is a true portrait of Clara. What I do know is that she would insist that it wasn't. She'd hate some of the words I've put in her mouth, cringe at those moments when she lets her guard down. And, of course, she'd be outraged by the bits I've made up'.<sup>68</sup> Here, the construction of myth alongside the representation of reality is notably clear. Moreover, he uses his brief programme note to draw the audience's attention to Clara's social standing and her position as a woman. He explains that the revue is not only a 'tribute' to the life of Madame Clara but also 'to those of her generation who never allowed such minor obstacles as class distinction, sex discrimination or the occasional world war to stand in their way'.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> While an interview with Arnold Evans would have further illuminated his decisions regarding *Novello & Son*, attempts to arrange an interview have not been possible since I have not been able to contact him.

<sup>68</sup> Arnold Evans, programme note to *Novello & Son*, 3 December 2014.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.



**Plate 8.2:** Programme Cover for *Novello & Son*<sup>70</sup>

Taking place in the Weston Studio, a small theatre situated within Cardiff Bay's iconic Wales Millennium Centre, the singular performance of the revue in this venue (on 3 December) was well-attended considering the size of the performance setting. The demographic of the audience was significantly formed from members of an older generation, indicated by a wash of white hair visible over the few rows of the tiered seating. The set was minimal; a single table and a candle was positioned carefully at the back right-hand side of the stage while a grand piano (fully staged with its lid open) was situated on the left. Throughout the hour-long show, clever

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<sup>70</sup> Personal collection of Rachelle Barlow.

use of stage lighting provided dramatic effects to punctuate the story of Clara's life. As it may be expected for a tribute to a singular person, the cast consisted solely of Rosamund Shelley (who played Clara) and Christopher Littlewood (her accompanist, who played at times the role of Ivor at the piano).

What is most interesting in terms of this thesis, however, is the representation of Clara and the reception of the event portrayed in the press. In particular, it is the relationship between a female and a male, Clara and her son, that is especially noteworthy. While the title of the tribute – *Novello & Son* – suggests that Novello (the role assumed here by Clara) occupies the superior position in this partnership, the hierarchical relationship is reversed in reality. In a review published by the news website *Wales Online*, the show is framed immediately in terms of Ivor's fame rather than solely on Clara's successes. For example, the title reads 'Ivor Novello's mother is brilliantly captured in stage show' and the by-line refers to the 'Cardiff entertainer's famous mum'.<sup>71</sup> Although the adjectives of 'brilliant' and 'famous' indicate a sense of approval from the article's author named Mike Smith, he later says that 'Rosamund Shelley is superb as the driven, talented, egocentric, bitchy, at times pompous and, ultimately, out of her depth product of a musical Welsh Methodist family'.<sup>72</sup> Considering the lack of negative press surrounding Clara and her choir throughout the late Victoria period and well into the twentieth century, it must be questioned how much truth there is in this depiction exposed to audiences in the twenty-first century.<sup>73</sup> Here, a negative portrayal is framed in terms of positive reception.

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<sup>71</sup> Mike Smith, 'Ivor Novello's mother is brilliantly captured in stage show', *Wales Online*, 4 December 2014 <[www.walesonline.co.uk](http://www.walesonline.co.uk)> [accessed 15 April 2015]. It should be noted that while the show has since been performed in London (at the Jermyn Street Theatre on 31 May 2015), further reviews have not been forthcoming.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> However, Smith does note that the show 'does not claim to be the gospel truth about Clara Novello Davies'. See Smith, 4 December 2014 <[www.walesonline.co.uk](http://www.walesonline.co.uk)> [accessed 15 April 2015].



**Plate 8.3:** Ivor Novello Statue in Cardiff Bay<sup>74</sup>

The choice of music to accompany the show is also of interest. Arnold Evans has chosen for Clara (Shelley) to sing only songs composed by her son, despite the fact that Clara herself composed a number of songs and her choir sang a diverse repertoire of songs in English and in Welsh.<sup>75</sup> Evans' choice provided, however, a particularly poignant moment in the show. At a time when the musical successes of her famed Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir, Clara, who is dressed in a lavish black evening gown re-created from a portrait that hangs in the National Museum of

<sup>74</sup> 'Statue of Ivor Novello, Cardiff Bay 2009', People's Collection Wales website <<http://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/13439>> [accessed 8 June 2015].

<sup>75</sup> A list of the repertoire performed is not provided in the revue programme. Among Clara's compositions were solo songs entitled 'A Voice from the Spirit Land' (1897), 'Friend!' (1905), 'Mother!' (1911), 'Without Thee' (1911), 'Comfort' (1913) and 'No More War!' (1931). She also composed a duet for mezzo soprano and tenor entitled 'The Invitation' (1883) and a part-song for females voices named 'Love's Vigil' (1903).

Wales, turns around swiftly to face the audience as the house lights across the audience are raised to enable eye contact between the performer and the audience. Shelley begins conducting the audience as if they were the long-established members of the ladies' choir, and accepting the role assigned to them on this cold day in December 2014, members of the audience sang along.

Here, the choice of song – Ivor Novello's wartime classic, 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' – is significant; at an event signalled to remember the lifetime successes of Clara Novello Davies, it is her son's song that is audible. In this matter, Ivor (rather than Clara) is heard sonically, a symbolic gesture since it signals also that the legacy of Ivor and a collective memory of his music is remembered at this time. Here, the location of the venue in Cardiff Bay is also significant since a statue of Ivor Novello was erected there in 2009 (Plate 8.4). Created by Peter Nicholas (1934–2015), the 7ft bronze sculpture features Ivor looking over his shoulder at the Wales Millennium Centre.<sup>76</sup> Although memorialising an important figure in Welsh music, the statue features as another example of a male hegemony since a similar figure celebrating the achievements of Clara Novello Davies does not exist. Once again, the women of Harlech are marginalised in order to perpetuate the myth of Wales as the 'land of my fathers'.

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<sup>76</sup> The statue cost £80,000 to build, an amount that was raised through an official charity named the Ivor Novello Statue Fund. See 'Bronze Ivor Novello Statue unveiled in Cardiff Bay', *Wales Online*, 28 June 2009 <[www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/bronze-ivor-novello-statue-unveiled-2102619](http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/bronze-ivor-novello-statue-unveiled-2102619)> [accessed 10 June 2015].

## Conclusions

This thesis has concerned the ways in which choral singing in Wales was developed between 1872, the year in which a massed Welsh choir ‘won’ its first title at a national event, and the end of the First World War in 1918. However, it has problematised a number of key issues relating to Welsh history, namely gender and identity (particularly nationhood). Here, choral singing functioned as a locus for interrogating these wider issues through musical performance. In particular, I provided a diachronic representation of choral singing that called into question the exclusion of women in extant accounts concerning Welsh choirs, an exclusion that continues to exist today. While the opening chapters provided a theoretical and historical overview of male predominance in Welsh choral singing, I showed that the first major event relating to vocal practice was performed by both men and women. In the second half of the thesis, I provided a representation of women’s history in Wales that was conducted through historical analysis and ethnographic research. In doing so, I argued that prominent female choirs did exist alongside their male counterparts. Utilising an array of newspaper articles, I showed how the activities of such choirs were frequently reported in the press, and thus the omission of women from the tradition has been seemingly constructed over time. Or, to invoke Hobsbawm, the vision of the Welsh male choir as a single, iconic symbol of nationhood is an ‘invented tradition’.<sup>77</sup>

The notion of collective practice has been central to my examination of choral singing, following scholars such as Bithell (2014) and Bohlman (2011) who respectively suggest that the social structure of choirs allows them to be viewed as representative of communities from which their members are drawn as well as act as a representative for the nation on stage. The dual role of promoting a local and a national identity was exemplified by the South Wales Choral Union, which provided a community focus and an outlet for national aspiration through music for its

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<sup>77</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), pp.1–15.



working-class singers. Here, and throughout much of this thesis, social class was key.

Participation in choirs, such as the South Wales Choral Union and the Rhondda Glee Society, provided an alternative reality to the increasing pressures on mining communities in South Wales. Although there was a connection between singing (particularly by men), industry and a social class (working class), I showed that alternatives to this (now stereotyped) view were also at play. For example, on the one hand, the Rhondda Glee Society subverted the bourgeois image of eighteenth-century glee clubs in England. On the other, it maintained at times the connection through concert dress (tails), repertoire (glees) and performance context (performing for members of the bourgeoisie). Similarly, singers from both Clara Novello Davies' and Hannah Hughes-Thomas' choirs negotiated class boundaries through their engagement in providing so-called 'high-class' entertainment to working-class communities.

In a broader sense, I argue that I have contributed to ethnomusicological research and studies on Welsh history in a number of ways. First, as a gendered interrogation of choral music in Wales, this thesis addresses a significant issue in ethnomusicology; studies of Welsh music are almost entirely absent from the field. Moreover, where studies of Welsh choral singing do exist in other disciplines (such as G. Williams, 1998), the issue of gender is not fully critiqued despite the development of the tradition along gendered lines from around 1880. In this matter, I contribute not only to the dearth of literature regarding female practices, but also to the limited histories of male singing in Wales; although male singing is prominent in Wales, its advancement has yet to be fully documented in an academic study. Here, my discussion of glee singing in Wales in general and the Rhondda Glee Society in particular is an important contribution (see Chapter 5). Second, this thesis is consistent with yet contributes to the established literature on the contemporary issue of commemoration (particularly pertinent in ethnomusicology). This is especially true for my discussion of commemorative events in relation to Caradog's Côt Mawr (Chapter 3). While scholars such as Herbert (a musicologist) and Williams (a historian) have discussed the contest in terms of an emerging sense of nationhood in Wales at that time, they do

not address how the event was memorialised, remembered or celebrated in the following century. Third, by drawing upon an array of archival sources as well as utilising a number of recently-digitised print media, I uncover the forgotten legacies of two, significant female musicians: Clara Novello Davies (Chapter 5) and Hannah Hughes-Thomas (Chapter 6). To my knowledge, substantial details regarding their lives have not been published in an academic study nor have they appeared in local histories. In this matter, this thesis fills significant lacunae.

This research has also signalled a number of ways in which the topic could be further developed. As noted in Chapter 1, the relationship between the past and the present is crucial in this thesis. On the one hand, I examined here the construction of gendered performance in choral practice by providing a historical approach to choral music in Wales. On the other hand, I deconstructed an established construction of gender identity in Welsh choirs by examining the representation of female choirs to demonstrate the subordination of women both in Welsh music and in Welsh culture. However, the project could be developed in terms of a greater interaction with ethnographic techniques, such as interviewing. While descendants of the choirs studied here have not been located, they may be forthcoming in years to come. Since the choristers themselves are no longer alive, it would be especially interesting to uncover how musical achievements were transmitted through familial connections. Moreover, such engagement may also reveal personal archives of musical materials held at home rather than in an institutional repository.

Another way in which the research could be expanded is to trace further the development of female choirs in the mid-twentieth century. For example, I have also uncovered a third Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir which was active in America during the 1930s (it was established by Gertrude Gronow who was originally a member of Hannah's choir). In this respect, a consideration of the relationship between music and representation in the Welsh diaspora in America (both North and South) would be especially interesting. Moreover, since Gronow's choir differs from the earlier examples (especially in terms of size and visual

representation – they appear to be dressed in ‘flapper’ dresses), a possible study could entail an examination of these three female choirs and their relationship with the British royal family. Finally, a comparative approach to the subject of Welsh choirs and identity could also be taken. In this matter, interviews with contemporary choirs attempting to uncover how a Welsh musical past is imagined in the present would be a welcome addition to the ethnomusicological literature on nostalgia.

To conclude, I have presented in this thesis a new form of historical ethnography. Although both existing and emerging research in ethnomusicology engages with historical sources and personal narratives (written especially by those who define themselves as historical ethnomusicologists), I take an original approach by applying such techniques to the music of Wales. Referencing in particular the issues of gender, identity (including language and social class), politics and economic concerns, I contend that in order to understand the musical present, we must first understand the musical past. In this matter, contemporary representations of musical heritage, nationhood and identity are often performed musically by male ensembles, signalling what could be termed a mythical ‘land of [men’s] song’. By contrast, the musical endeavours of Clara Novello Davies and Hannah Hughes-Thomas reveal an alternative reality in the past. Accordingly, I argue that both women and men were instrumental in creating Wales as the ‘land of song’.

## Appendix

The following schedule represents known repertoire performed by the four case study choirs, namely the South Wales Choral Union, the Rhondda Glee Society and the two Royal Welsh Ladies' Choirs (led by Clara Novello Davies and Hannah Hughes-Thomas respectively). Each of the following entries has been referenced throughout the thesis. Here, I have categorised (where possible) what type of piece was performed by the choir (for example, oratorio or part song). Where an *eisteddfod* test piece was performed by a choir in a different context, I have added [Test piece] in the first field to mark this distinction. Similarly, where I have been unable to ascertain precise information, I have used parenthesis [ ] to represent the data. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate a number of performance programmes or manuscripts to analyse further the choice of repertoire performed; much of the information regarding repertoire and performance practice has been collected from press reports published in local newspapers. Perhaps surprisingly, the diary of Elizabeth Clement (of the Hughes-Thomas female choir) featured few references concerning what the choir performed, as did the autobiography of Clara Novello Davies.

However, the following appendix does allow for a comparison of known repertoire performed. For the female choirs, it can be seen that the shared repertoire included a number of Welsh airs, particularly 'Y Deryn Pur', 'Llwyn Onn' and 'Clychau Aberdovey'. Despite the Hughes-Thomas choir not competing at the Chicago Eisteddfod, the test piece ('The Spanish Gipsy Girl') was incorporated into its repertoire. In terms of other shared repertoire and national identity in particular, the Welsh national anthem was performed both by the Rhondda Glee Society (as part of the Gramophone Recording, 1899) and the Hannah Hughes-Thomas choir in San Francisco (1911). Moreover, both choirs sang 'God Bless the Prince of Wales' in Welsh (in 1899 and 1911 again respectively). An examination of repertoire in this appendix also shows that there is little commonality between the four choirs as a whole. However, there is one exception:

the 'March of the Men of Harlech'. Although it is not known whether the piece was performed in Welsh or English on the occasions mentioned, the commonality of the item between the choirs is significant since the piece has both a national and a gendered significance (see Chapter 1 especially).

## Appendix of Repertoire

### South Wales Choral Union

Type	Title	Composer	Language	Performance Context	Date
Oratorio	In Tears of Grief' from <i>St Matthew Passion</i>	J. S. Bach	English	National Music Meeting, London	6/6/1872
Symphony					
Cantata	The Night is Departing' from <i>Lobgesang</i>	Mendelssohn	English	National Music Meeting, London	6/6/1872
Oratorio	Then round about the starry throne' from <i>Samson</i>	Handel	English	National Music Meeting, London	6/6/1872
Oratorio	By Slow Degrees' from <i>Belshazzar</i>	Handel	English	National Music Meeting, London	Not performed
Oratorio	Nightingale Chorus' from <i>Soloman</i>	Handel	English	National Music Meeting, London	Not performed
Song	<i>Dixit Dominus</i>	Leonardo Leo	Latin	National Music Meeting, London	Not performed
Motet	<i>In Exitu Israel</i>	Samuel Wesley	Latin	National Music Meeting, London	Not performed
Madrigal	All Creatures Now'	John Bennet	English	National Music Meeting, London	Not performed
Welsh air	March of the Men of Harlech'				
Chorus	The many rend the skies' from <i>Alexander's Feast</i>	Handel	English	National Music Meeting, London	10/7/1873
Oratorio	See what love hath the Father' from <i>St Paul</i>	Mendelssohn	English	National Music Meeting, London	10/7/1873
Oratorio	Hallelujah to the Father' from <i>The Mount of Olives</i>	Beethoven	English	National Music Meeting, London	10/7/1873
Chorus	Come with torches' from <i>Walpurgis Night</i>	Mendelssohn	English	National Music Meeting, London	10/7/1873
Motet	I Wrestle and Pray'	J. S. Bach	English	National Music Meeting, London	10/7/1873

### Rhondda Glee Society

Dramatic					
Cantata	Valiant Warriors from <i>David and Goliath</i>	David Jenkins	English	Eisteddfod, Bridgend	1887
Glee	The Beleaguered	Arthur Sullivan	English	National Eisteddfod, London	1887
Oratorio	Where is He? from <i>The Mount of Olives</i>	Beethoven	English	National Eisteddfod, London	1887
Dramatic					
Cantata	Valiant Warriors from <i>David and Goliath</i>	David Jenkins	English	National Eisteddfod, London	1887
Chorus	The Destruction of Gaza	Laurent de Rille	English	National Eisteddfod, Swansea	1891

Chorus	The Pilgrims' Chorus	Joseph Parry	English	National Eisteddfod, Swansea	1891
Song	The War Horse	David Jenkins	English	National Eisteddfod, Pontypridd	8/1893
Song	The Tyrol	Ambrose Thomas	[English]	National Eisteddfod, Pontypridd	8/1893
Chorus	The Pilgrims' Chorus	Joseph Parry	English	World's Fair Eisteddfod, Chicago	9/1893
Song	Cambria's Song of Freedom	T. J. Davies	English	World's Fair Eisteddfod, Chicago	9/1893
Song	God Save the Queen		English	Eaton Hall, Chester	1/1899
Song	God Bless the Prince of Wales		Welsh	Eaton Hall, Chester	1/1899
[Test Piece]	The Tyrol	Ambrose Thomas	[English]	Eaton Hall, Chester	1/1899
[Test Piece]	The Pilgrims' Chorus	Joseph Parry	English	Eaton Hall, Chester	1/1899
Song	Night and Day		English	Eaton Hall, Chester	1/1899
Song	Ymdaith Gwyr Harlech		Welsh	Eaton Hall, Chester	1/1899
Song	Ymdaith Gwyr Harlech		Welsh	Gramophone Record (no. 4508)	30/9/1899
National Anthem	Hen Wlad fy Nhadau	Evan and James James	Welsh	Gramophone Record (no. 4509)	30/9/1899
Song	Yr Haf		Welsh	Gramophone Record (no. 4510)	30/9/1899
Hymn	Bydd Myrdd o Rhyfeddodau		Welsh	Gramophone Record (no. 4511)	30/9/1899
Song	Annabelle Lee	Joseph Parry	[English]	Gramophone Record (no. 4512)	30/9/1899
[Test Piece]	The Tyrol	Ambrose Thomas	[English]	Gramophone Record (no. 4513)	30/9/1899
Song	Codwn Hwyl		Welsh	Gramophone Record (no. 4514)	30/9/1899
Hymn	O Fryniau Caersalem		Welsh	Gramophone Record (no. 4515)	30/9/1899
Chorus	Soldier's Chorus from <i>Faust</i>	Gounod		Gramophone Record (no. 4516)	30/9/1899
Part Song	The Tyrol	Ambrose Thomas	English	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900

### The United Male Voice Choir (Rhondda Glee Society and Barry District Glee Society)

Chorus	The Destruction of Gaza	Laurent de Rille	English	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Chorus	The Pilgrims	Joseph Parry	English	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Part Song	Martyrs of the Arena	Laurent de Rille	English	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900

### Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir (conducted by Clara Novello Davies)

Part Song	The Gitana	Joseph Roeckel	English		1885
Part Song	The Minstrel Prince	Joseph Roeckel	English		[1889]
Part Song	Westward Ho!	Joseph Roeckel	English	St James' Hall, London	2/7/1890
Part Song	Bugeilio's Gwenith Gwyn	Trad., arr. D. Emlyn Evans	Welsh	St James' Hall, London	2/7/1890
Part Song	The Spanish Gipsy Girl	Eduard Lassen, arr. Walter Damrosch	English	World's Fair Eisteddfod, Chicago	9/1893
Part Song	The Lord is my Shepherd	[American arrangement]	English	World's Fair Eisteddfod, Chicago	9/1893
Part Song	Fair Land we Greet Thee	Pinsuti	English	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Welsh air	Y Deryn Pur	Trad., arr. D. Emlyn Evans	Welsh	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Welsh air	Llwyn Onn	Trad., arr. D. Emlyn Evans	Welsh	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Welsh air	Clychau Aberdovey	Trad., arr. D. Emlyn Evans	Welsh	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Test Piece	The Spanish Gipsy Girl	Eduard Lassen, arr. Walter Damrosch	English	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Part Song	Day is at last Departing	Raff	English	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Welsh air	Llwyn Onn	Trad., arr. D. Emlyn Evans	Welsh	Palace Theatre, London	23/10/1900
Welsh air	Clychau Aberdovey	Trad., arr. D. Emlyn Evans	Welsh	Palace Theatre, London	23/10/1900
[Test piece]	The Spanish Gipsy Girl	Eduard Lassen, arr. Walter Damrosch	English	Palace Theatre, London	23/10/1900
Folk song	The Keel Row		English	Palace Theatre, London	23/10/1900
Anthem	Rule Britannia		English	Palace Theatre, London	23/10/1900

### The United Choir (Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir (Novello Davies), Rhondda Glee Society and Barry District Glee Society)

Part Song	Yr Haf	Gwilym Gwent	Welsh	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Welsh air	March of the Men of Harlech			Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
Chorus	Hallelujah' from <i>Messiah</i>	Handel	English	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900



National anthem	The Marsellaise	French	Exposition Universelle, Paris	25/7/1900
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### Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir (conducted by Hannah Hughes-Thomas)

Welsh air	Llwyn Onn	Trad., arr. Unknown	Welsh	National Eisteddfod, Llandudno	08/1896
Part song	God in Nature	Schubert	[English]	National Eisteddfod, Llandudno	08/1896
Glee	The Spinning Chorus	Wagner	English	Alexandra Dock, Cardiff	13/7/1907
Glee	Where the Bee Sucks	Henry Bishop	English	Alexandra Dock, Cardiff	13/7/1907
Song	The Spanish Gipsy Girl	Eduard Lassen	English	Alexandra Dock, Cardiff	13/7/1907
Chorus	Hallelujah' from <i>Messiah</i>	Handel	English	Mormon Temple, Salt Lake City	1/1912
Song	March of the Men of Harlech			Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	Yr Haf	Gwylm Gwent	Welsh	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Welsh air	Y Deryn Pur	Trad., arr. D. Emlyn Evans	Welsh	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Welsh air	Clychau Aberdovey	Trad., arr. D. Emlyn Evans	Welsh	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	A Welsh Rhapsody	Vincent	[English]	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	An Italian Salad	Genee	[English]	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Lullaby	Can Cwsg	Bishop	Welsh	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
National Anthem	Hen Wlad fy Nhadau	Evan and James James	Welsh	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	God Bless the Prince of Wales	Brinley Richards	Welsh	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	Let the Hills Resound with Song	Brinley Richards	English	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	Erin, the Tear and the Smile		English	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	Nyni yw'r Merched Cerddgar	Gwylm Gwent	Welsh	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	Gipsy Life	Schumann	English	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	Snow	Elgar	English	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	Now Tramp O'er Moss and Fell	Bishop	English	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	Wlad, Hoff Wlad ('Home, Sweet Home') <sup>1</sup>	E[mln] Evans	Welsh	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911

<sup>1</sup> This is not a literal translation. Reproduced from the concert programme printed in *San Francisco Call*, 1 December 1911.

Part song	Andalusian Bolero	Dessaur		Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911
Part song	Sweetest May	Evans Youngstown	English	Scottish Rite Hall, San Francisco	30/11/1911

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- MS 4.1290              Madame Clara Novello Davies – Miscellaneous items (i) Concert  
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October 1937; (ii) Letter to accompany the above programme; (iii) *Musical  
Standard*, 20 March 1915, article and photo; (iv) MS letter dated 12  
October 192[3] from Clara Novello Davies, 11 Aldwych, London WC2,  
regarding a concert in Cardiff, recipient unidentified, addressed to 'My  
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